TRAVELLER

NAVAL ADVENTURE 4: ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

SCIENCE FICTION ADVENTURE IN THE FAR FUTURE

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T R A V E L L E R

INTRODUCTION

In *Enemy of My Enemy* the Travellers serve as the crew of a naval ship on a mission into the District 268 subsector of the Spinward Marches. Their vessel must be a capital ship of the Imperial Navy and may be anything from a destroyer to a cruiser such as those featured in *Element Class Cruisers*.

District 268 is on the frontier and has only two Imperial star systems. However, the Imperium has a significant presence there, sponsoring no fewer than 10 client states, nearly a third of the systems in the subsector. The Imperium has all but crowned the high-population, industrialised world of Collace as the future subsector capital, replacing the interim capital at Mertactor.

Collace has an outsized presence in the subsector and has been the beneficiary of support and investment from the Imperium and numerous corporations, most notably the merchant cartel McClellan Factors and megacorporation Schunamann und Sohn AG (SuSAG). Collace is an industrial powerhouse, a manufacturer of low-cost, high-technology goods, which is awaiting its destiny to become an Imperial powerhouse on par with Mora, Trin, Regina and the other great subsector capitals of the Spinward Marches.

Not everyone is thrilled about the idea of making District 268 part of Imperial territory. Many of the systems in the subsector are fiercely independent, none more so than Trexalon. Trexalon and Collace are in a state of cold war, which manifests itself in trade embargos, commerce raiding and occasional proxy wars fought in the neutral systems of the subsector. So far, Trexalon has been careful not to cross the line into open war with Collace, lest it incur the wrath of the Imperium. However, things are heating up and violent conflict may be on the horizon.

The current state of affairs has given the Imperium pause. There are problems elsewhere in the Spinward Marches and the noble houses are concerned about appearances. The Trexalon-Collace conflict has cast a dark pall over the region and the Imperial government feels that it cannot afford to have another crisis on its hands when there is already trouble brewing on their borders with the Zhodani and Sword Worlds. The Imperial Moot tends to get touchy when problems arise in the Marches.

Enter the Imperial Navy. Whilst the navy is primarily a fighting force, it also serves in other capacities. Chief among those is diplomacy. When an Imperial capital ship arrives in port at the invitation of a client state or other important star system, it is cause célèbre. The local honour guard come out in their regalia, starports are decorated with the Imperial Sunburst, the local media is stirred into a frenzy and the landed gentry wine and dine the officer corps. Simply put, the navy is a symbol of Imperial power and everyone wants to be associated with it when one of its capital ships comes into port.

Whether trained in the fine arts of diplomacy or not, the captain of an Imperial Navy ship becomes an ambassador and the officer corps their emissaries. More fortunate captains are accompanied by members of the Imperial diplomatic corps – nobles trained in the fine arts of politics and negotiation – but more often than not, the navy is sent in to handle the chore all by themselves.

OVERVIEW

Enemy of My Enemy starts at the Mille Falcs Imperial Naval Base. As the Travellers await their orders, they have a few days to take liberty at the port. During this period of relaxation, the Travellers are approached by several members of naval administration, each of whom has a different take on the future of District 268. Delving into politics is anathema on most naval bases; apparently not so at Mille Falcs.

After receiving their mission, the Travellers go to Collace where they are welcomed by the local luminaries. Most Collacians are excited about the world's future as subsector capital but there is a vocal minority who seem less than eager to see this happen… at least not any time soon. After the pleasantries are over, the Travellers serve in an advisory role to the Collace Planetary Navy (CPN) whose methods are quite unlike those of the Imperium, as the Travellers quickly discover.

After concluding this mission segment, the Travellers are asked to go after bigger fish: a rumoured pirate base located somewhere in the subsector. To find it they are going to have to travel its worlds, collect intelligence

and do some detective work. By putting the clues together, they can discover the location of the base. For the purposes of gathering intelligence and rumours, the worlds of District 268 may be sorted into three groups.

- Client States
- Neutral Worlds
- Hostile Worlds

Each offers a vastly different perspective on the current state of affairs in District 268. Client state worlds are – for the most part – agreeable with the Imperium and look forward to the day when the Imperial Sunburst banner flies at their starports. Hostile worlds are fervently anti-Imperial. The Travellers, not wanting to start an interstellar incident, might try to avoid such places but as luck would have it, some of the best information is obtainable only on hostile worlds. Neutral worlds are the most complex, with some pro-Imperial, some anti-Imperial and some ambivalent or simply do not care whether District 268 remains independent or not.

The information they gather eventually guides them to Crossbones, a secret pirate base hidden in the outer zone of the Inchin system. Depending on their actions, the Travellers might discover that the base and its occupants are not quite what they seem. They are faced with a choice; destroy the base or investigate further to see if some sort of non-violent solution is possible.

They must then return to base at Mille Falcs for debriefing and the conclusion of their mission.

Enemy of My Enemy is a naval adventure focused on the gathering of intelligence and its useful implementation. Travellers who do not question orders, and do not make an effort to investigate the places they visit thoroughly, will believe their job is rather straightforward: Visit an Imperial ally, help them hunt pirates and destroy them. However, taking the most direct course of action might make things considerably worse and cause problems for the Imperium. Heaven help the officer corps that reports back to Mille Falcs for their debriefing should they bluster through the District 268 minefield with reckless abandon.

REQUIRED AND USEFUL MATERIALS

The *Traveller Core Rulebook* and the *Element Class Cruisers* boxed set are required to run this adventure. The *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*, which comes with the boxed set, provides mechanics to resolve many of the operations that a capital ship must conduct over the course of a mission. Naval missions are complex enterprises and key aspects of running a capital ship are abstracted to help Referees streamline the story so Travellers can get down to the more interesting and engaging aspects of an adventure.

The *Element Class Cruisers* guide and blueprints are required if the Travellers are the crew of an Element cruiser but there are other optional titles that may prove useful or interesting. *High Guard* features many starships and small craft as well as the technology contained within their hulls. The ebook supplement *High Guard: Deployment Shuttles* provides more details on a class of small craft used by the CPN.

In addition, *Behind the Claw* gives details about District 268 and the Spinward Marches, providing Referees and Travellers more context and a framework for future naval adventures in the sector.

C H A P T E R - O N E

REFEREE'S INFORMATION

The following information is for the Referee. The Referee may choose to make portions of this information available to the Travellers. A great deal of this data is available via public information systems, a ship's Library software or simply by travelling from world-to-world and collecting rumours and intelligence. Naval missions are demanding and it takes time to investigate, discover and analyse data are tasks, which are easy to overlook. The success of a naval mission is largely dependent on the quality of intelligence that is gathered. Referees should reward diligent Travellers with valuable pieces of information when they seek it out even if the complete picture remains somewhat obscured.

DISTRICT 268

On the periphery of the Imperium are subsectors designated as 'Districts'. The last frontier of the Spinward Marches is District 268, which was opened for Imperial expansion in 940 but has yet to be incorporated. The subsector is bifurcated by two stellar gaps known as the Greater and Lesser Collace Rifts. The rifts have an effect on the culture and politics of the subsector, effectively dividing it into rimward and coreward provinces. The rimward province is dominated by the Collace system and includes an extremity of the Spinward Main, the extensive jump-1 path that blankets much of the sector. The coreward province is a fractious collection of individualistic star systems, most of which relish their independence.

District 268 includes 10 Imperial client states, worlds sponsored by the Imperium but not yet incorporated into its borders. The other worlds of the subsector are non-aligned with some seeking Imperial sponsorship, some which prefer to remain independent and some that are adamantly opposed to joining the Imperium.

THE COLLACE-TREXALON COLD WAR

The Collace and Trexalon systems are in a state of cold war. Collace has established itself as the most important world in the subsector. It is a frozen water world and not easily habitable but is a nexus along the Spinward Main, an ideal location for trade, industry and the seat of authority. Collace is governed by a representative democracy and while the Elected Council and Prime Designate do a decent job of taking care of the citizenry, everyone knows who the real authorities are: a corporate oligarchy led by SuSAG and McClellan Factors. Since the subsector is not currently under the Imperium, it has not yet established fiefs or appointed nobles to oversee it; however, several key figures are vying for the as-yet-to-be-appointed role of subsector duke, half-jokingly called the 'protoduke' in some circles.

Trexalon is a worthy adversary, falling just short of Collace in population and technology. The Trexalon Technical Consortium (TTC), an assemblage of the planet's top corporations, hopes to offer a viable alternative to the seeming inevitability of Imperial annexation. The Trexalonians assert that the Imperium has engineered a firewall against them by establishing client states on Collace, Tarsus and Motmos (where the Imperium has also built a naval base) and an Imperial Research Station on Judice. Trexalon is surrounded by worlds under the influence of the Imperium and only has easy access to Amber Zoned Pavabid, for whom it has built a sophisticated satellite defence network. Pavabid is governed by an oppressive religious dictatorship but has rich stores of iridium and platinum that Collace has desired for some time; however, it is Trexalon who has courted and garnered the trust of the Pavabidian Thearchs. For Trexalon to engage in trade with other worlds in the subsector, it must go through worlds influenced by the Imperium. To combat this, the TTC has lavished technological wares on almost every independent world in the subsector in an effort to curry favour with them and show there are alternatives to Imperial membership.

SUSAG

Schunamann und Sohn AG (SuSAG) is an Imperial megacorporation that manufactures pharmaceuticals, medical and surgical products, industrial chemicals, chemical and bacteriological weapons, and engineered organisms for industrial and agricultural applications. Most of its products are made within Imperial borders but some are manufactured in unaligned space, most notably psionic drugs that are illegal in the Imperium.

SuSAG Security is known for its organisational efficiency. Perhaps no other megacorporation has so much invested in securing its sites, personnel and industrial secrets. While most security personnel are internal, SuSAG also employs mercenaries for some operations.

The reputation of the company came under fire during the Psionic Suppressions (800–826), from which it has never fully recovered. The large security apparatus of the company, coupled with its continued manufacture of controversial products has made the public suspicious of its intentions. SuSAG engages in a comprehensive advertising campaign designed to combat its negative public image.

SuSAG has a large presence in District 268. Among its many assets are a pharmaceuticals plant on Collace and a psionic-drug making facility on Tarsus.

MCCLELLAN FACTORS

Many corporations have sought to get the jump on the eventual annexation of District 268 by establishing dominant positions before Imperial regulators and politicians come in to level the playing field. One such corporation is McClellan Factors, a merchant cartel that has effectively pushed out most of its competition using a variety of tactics. McClellan has outcompeted, undersold, bought out and – if you believe the rumours – intimidated and sabotaged other merchant lines to get them out of the picture. By most standards, McClellan is an upstanding and ethical company, so such base accusations are more than likely rumours spread by their competitors.

Factors are regional managers who govern territories that comprise anything from a single world or star system up to a cluster of systems. McClellan practices realpolitik and prides itself on being strictly neutral, with regional facilities on Imperial worlds, neutral worlds and even worlds opposed to Imperial expansion.

Up until recently, McClellan's most viable competitor was Baraccai Technum (BT), whose operations they have largely expunged from District 268. BT is in the process of regrouping for a new corporate offensive against McClellan and is currently attempting to establish a strong foothold in neighbouring Egyrn subsector of the Trojan Reach.

Factors are present at Mertactor, Trexalon and several worlds of Egyrn where they continue to doggedly oppose BT and any fledgling lines that emerge. McClellan has recently sent Leviathan merchant cruisers into Egyrn.

THE PLANKWELL PROJECT

The annexation of District 268 has been a point of contention for some time. A faction within the Imperial Navy headed by upstart Rear Admiral Lord Santanocheev supports the immediate acquisition of the subsector under the aegis of the Plankwell Project. The project is named for the war hero, Admiral Olav hault-Plankwell, who famously took his forces to Capital after the First Frontier War to assassinate Empress Jacqueline I and claimed the Iridium Throne for himself.

Chief among the project's detractors is the august Duchess Delphine Adorania Muudashir of Mora who, on the side of the nobility, has cautioned the Imperium not to move so swiftly with the annexation when there are far more important issues in the Marches that need to be addressed.

Extremist members of the Plankwell Project have formed an inner circle who plan to take aggressive and, if necessary, subversive action to hasten annexation.

IMPERIAL NAVY, SUBSECTOR NAVIES & PLANETARY NAVIES

The Imperium is a decentralised union of over 11,000 worlds. The sectors that comprise the Imperium extend across far too wide an expanse for the government to exert centralised authority over its entirety. The Emperor primarily uses two tools to manage the empire; the nobility and the Imperial Navy. The feudal structure of the nobility enables the Imperium to oversee and manage the affairs of its worlds spread over a vast area. The Imperial Navy works to ensure the security of those worlds and the flow of commerce between them.

The Imperial Navy is a vast interstellar military force with bases spread throughout Imperial space. Most sectors have one Depot system, where the majority of its starships are built and serviced. Generally speaking, the Imperial Navy reserves its larger ships – carriers, battleships, dreadnoughts and so forth – for the defence of a sector against external threats. The navy also maintains numbered fleets and colonial fleets in most subsectors. Colonial fleets are smaller and usually comprise ships that would otherwise have been appointed to the breaker yard to be recycled and repurposed. These fleets serve as a reserve and may be called upon to serve in various capacities when the line fleets are otherwise engaged. Numbered fleets are also called subsector fleets. Subsectors are feudal subdivides of Imperial sectors and subsector navies are to some degree instruments of the nobility that manage a given subsector. Numbered subsector navies give structure to the greater Imperial Navy and their ships are called upon to serve as ships of the line as needed. Subsector fleets are mostly comprised of destroyer escorts, destroyers and may have a light or heavy cruiser as their flagship. Subsector navies may have larger ships of the line in their service but typically only on a provisional basis from the parent Imperial Navy.

Planetary navies are significantly more diverse in nature and purpose. In principle, a planetary navy is any collection of spacecraft that have been designated for the defence of a single world or star system. This includes system defence boats, fighters, armed traders and any other spacecraft that the system has procured for the express purpose of defence.

The possession of a planetary navy is usually a function of technology and means. Simply put, planets with the necessary technology and a shipyard capable of producing spacecraft are more likely to have one. However, there are worlds of low technology with no shipyards, which nevertheless develop the means to import a planetary navy. Generally speaking, systems with Tech Level 8+ and a starport of Class C or better almost always have planetary navies and those below such standards must import one with the means available to them.

Planetary navies are usually comprised of slower-than-light (STL) spacecraft but this limitation is not universal; some have one or more squadrons of faster-than-light (FTL) ships. Planetary navies that possess jump-capable ships have been known to establish a presence in neighbouring star systems for various reasons, including:

- The neighbouring system is a possession of or is occupied by the system with the planetary navy. Such occupied worlds have Government code 6, indicating a captive government or military rule.
- The planetary navy's home system has been subjected to attacks either by or from a neighbouring system and is present to retaliate. Examples include a brushfire war between two systems or the neighbouring system is being used as a haven by pirates or raiders.
- The neighbouring system has either a weak planetary navy or none to speak of and has requested the assistance of a system endowed with one.
- The planetary navy has been dispatched to help conquer the neighbouring star system.

The Imperium generally frowns upon the latter but has been known to look the other way. The Imperium has a policy of non-intervention with individual planetary governments provided they do not impede the flow of trade or break Imperial laws. Besieged worlds sometimes petition the Imperium for relief under such circumstances and have been known to receive it should they be able to establish that either of the infractions listed above have occurred. There is a fine line to cross here but the Imperium is careful not to get involved in conflicts that it can avoid.

Many star systems in District 268 have planetary navies. Whilst some have become Imperial client states and are afforded a degree of protection by the Imperium, most feel it is in their best interests to have their own navy. The two systems with the most powerful planetary navies in the subsector are Collace and Trexalon. Both have jump-capable ships in spite of the fact that neither has the ability to build jump drives of their own. The CPN is far more powerful than the Trexalon Technical Consortium Navy (TTCN), in no small part because Collace is an Imperial client state and is therefore the beneficiary of a great deal more investment. In addition to a large force of smaller starships, the CPN has acquired a number of destroyers that have been decommissioned from the Imperial Navy and refitted for action.

A NOTE ABOUT NAVAL ADVENTURES

Running a naval adventure is different than other Traveller yarns. Instead of being retired from previous careers, the Travellers are mid-career, in the service of the Imperial Navy as its officers and enlisted personnel. In a naval campaign, acquiring riches, high-tech gear and paying off a starship mortgage are not prime motivators. Travellers are driven by duty, prestige, honour, promotion in the ranks and advancing the greater glory of the Imperium and its powerful navy.

Whilst Travellers in other types of campaign have the freedom to go anywhere and do essentially anything, in a naval campaign the action is centred on their ship and its current mission. This should not be played as a limitation but an advantage. It is a rare occurrence for non-naval Travellers to experience a starship with the size and power of an Imperial capital ship in any other type of adventure or campaign. This massive ship is their home. Make use of its deck plans and – if they serve aboard an Element cruiser – the blueprints from the *Element Class Cruisers* boxed set.

The primary setting of a naval adventure is the ship itself. The bridge (and separate command bridge, if present), medical bay, turrets and weapons modules, engineering sections, staterooms and commons become the fabric of many scenes. Conflicts and conversations between officers in the halls, terse discussions on the way to the small-craft hangar and the adrenaline-fuelled rush of reporting to battle stations are the daily trappings of a naval campaign. There is, of course, still a great deal of actual travelling to be had as their ship makes its way among the stars to carry out a mission, however ultimately the Travellers always come back to their ship. The ship is a home, a powerful tool and a symbol of Imperial magnificence all wrapped up into one and should be an exciting and dynamic setting in and of itself.

For more ideas on enhancing the ship's role in a naval adventure, refer to The Ship and Crew as Characters on page 10 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*.

C H A P T E R - T W O

MILLE FALCS: FRONTIER FORTRESS

The adventure begins as the Travellers' ship arrives at Mille Falcs on the spinward edge of the Imperium. Whilst the Imperium has no fleets permanently assigned to District 268, its two naval bases in the subsector host elements of the 100th Fleet out of Glisten. If *Enemy of My Enemy* is the start of a new naval campaign, the Referee may decide that the Travellers' starship is assigned to the 100th Fleet or another fleet in the Domain of Deneb. Depending on circumstances and the type of capital ship they have, the Travellers may have just come from Glisten where their ship might have undergone maintenance. If so, the stark contrast between the gleaming shipyards of Glisten and those of the Mille Falcs frontier installation should be apparent.

Whatever the case may be, the Travellers have arrived in the system to receive a new mission. Mille Falcs is the site of both an Imperial Navy and Scout Service base. Whilst the two arms of the Imperial military are certainly capable of cooperation, their cultures are quite different; nowhere is that more evident than on Mille Falcs where the two live a mostly separate existence. The navy resides in several well-appointed orbital space stations, each of which has a different purpose. The largest of these bases is a naval shipyard, which builds many types of naval small craft, primarily fighters and armed pinnaces. The scouts are mostly located on the parched surface of Mille Falcs itself, a murky world of rusty orange hue with an exotic atmosphere comprised primarily of nitrogen and methane. The scouts have a much smaller orbital presence on a space station of their own, separate from the naval base.

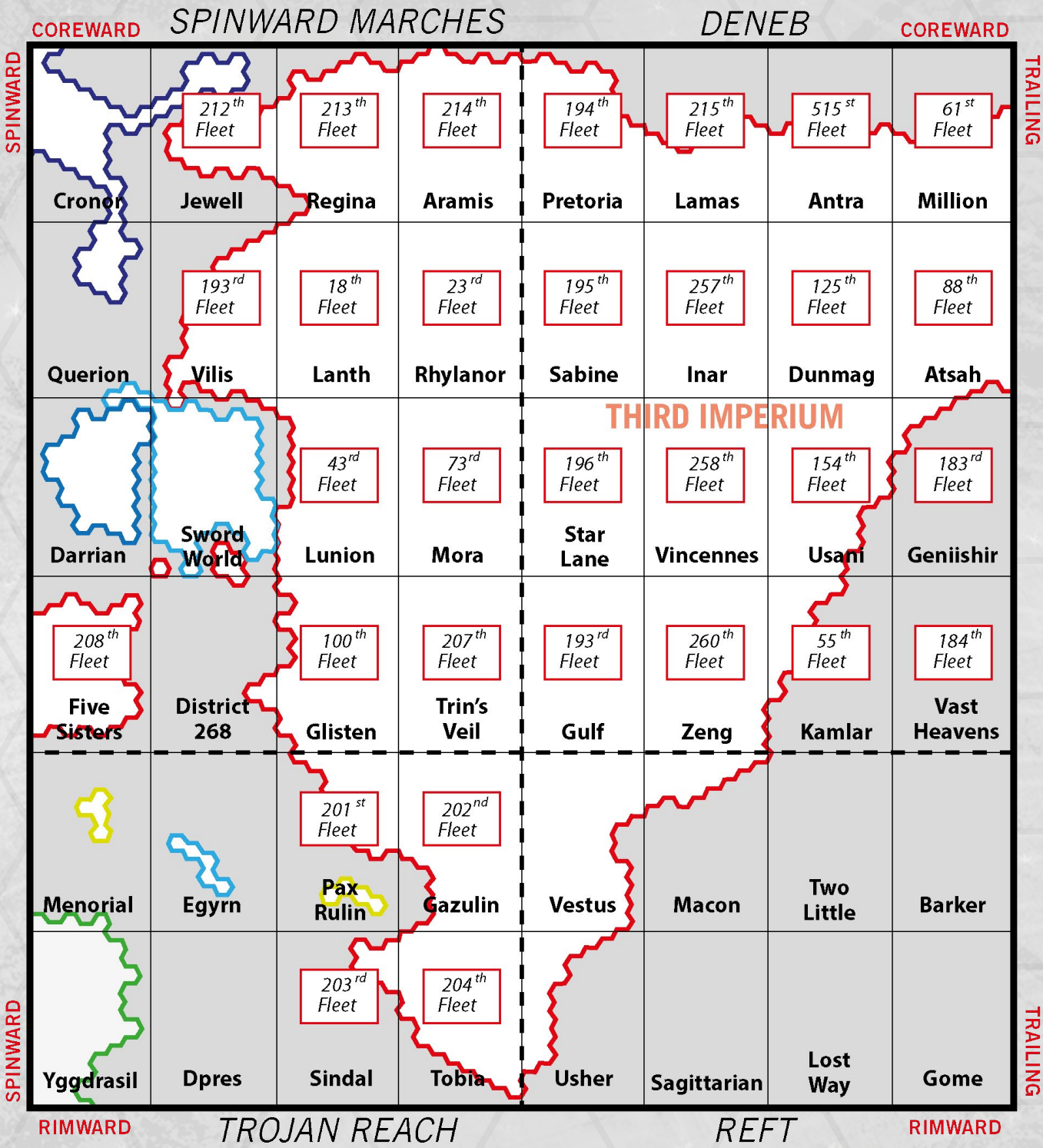
Beneath the murk, this large world is stitched by low mountain ranges, deep canyon systems and several small methane seas. Mille Falcs is tidally locked, so the same side of the planet always faces the system's red dwarf primary star. The facing side is very hot and convection winds carry some of the heat to the dark side, preventing it from completely freezing over. The scout base is located in the twilight band, the temperate strip between the two extremes. Landing on the obscured surface of Mille Falcs is a dangerous operation, best performed by skilled pilots. The scout base is significant in size and used to train personnel for operations on worlds with exotic atmospheres, high atmospheric pressure and high gravity. Whilst the navy has no permanent presence on Mille Falcs' surface, joint training operations are conducted from time-to-time and Travellers may engage in a brief adventure there for just that purpose if they have liberty to spend and the Referee allows it.

Establishing Crew Efficiency Index

At the start of the adventure, the Referee should determine the base Crew Efficiency Index (CEI). Refer to the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* for a complete description of CEI. If the Referee is running *Enemy of My Enemy* as part of an ongoing naval campaign, the CEI of the crew at the end of their last mission may be used. A typical CEI for a naval crew in peacetime is 6–8. However, if the campaign is being conducted in wartime – for example, after brushfire conflicts with the Sword Worlds or during the Fifth Frontier War – and the crew has won one or more battles, the base CEI should be higher, perhaps 9–12, depending on how much action they have seen and how well they performed. CEI typically moves towards a median score of 6–8 over time.

CAMPAIGN EVENT

The Referee may roll for a Campaign Event before the mission is assigned. Refer to Campaign Events on page 29 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*. Whilst they are optional, Campaign Events are a fine way to establish a segue between missions and add colour to a naval campaign.



Imperial Navy Numbered Fleets in the Domain of Deneb

RECRUITING

Reassignment and subsequent replacement of crew is a common occurrence in the navy and it stands to reason that this will happen to some degree at Mille Falcs. The Referee may determine that a nominal portion of the crew have been reassigned to other ships and the Travellers must orchestrate a draft of replacements from available personnel at the base. Refer to Recruiting Crewmembers on page 22 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* for more information.

It should be noted that the overall quality of available personnel on Mille Falcs lags a bit behind that of larger, more prestigious naval bases elsewhere in the Domain of Deneb. It will be difficult to maintain the ship's current average CEI if the draft is a large one. However, there are some gems to be had, highly qualified officers and enlisted personnel who have actually sought out assignment to Mille Falcs in the hope that they might be assigned to a ship that will see action on the frontier. Finding and recruiting such personnel requires effort by the Travellers to identify candidates, acquire their services and transfer them to the ship.

If no effort is made to carefully cull the available candidates, the average CEI of the replacements is 1-2 points lower than the Travellers' current CEI. However, if they make an effort to find and recruit superior replacements, it will require a Difficult (10+) Streetwise or Investigate check (1D days, INT). This represents an effort to scrutinise the available candidates in order to sort out the best among them.

The recruitment and transfer of the new draft is a job for administrative staff from the Crew branch. Use the ship's ECEI to determine the ability of personnel on the ship to make an Average (8+) Admin check (1D days, SOC) applying the Effect from the Streetwise or Investigate check. Use the Recruitment table to determine the results.

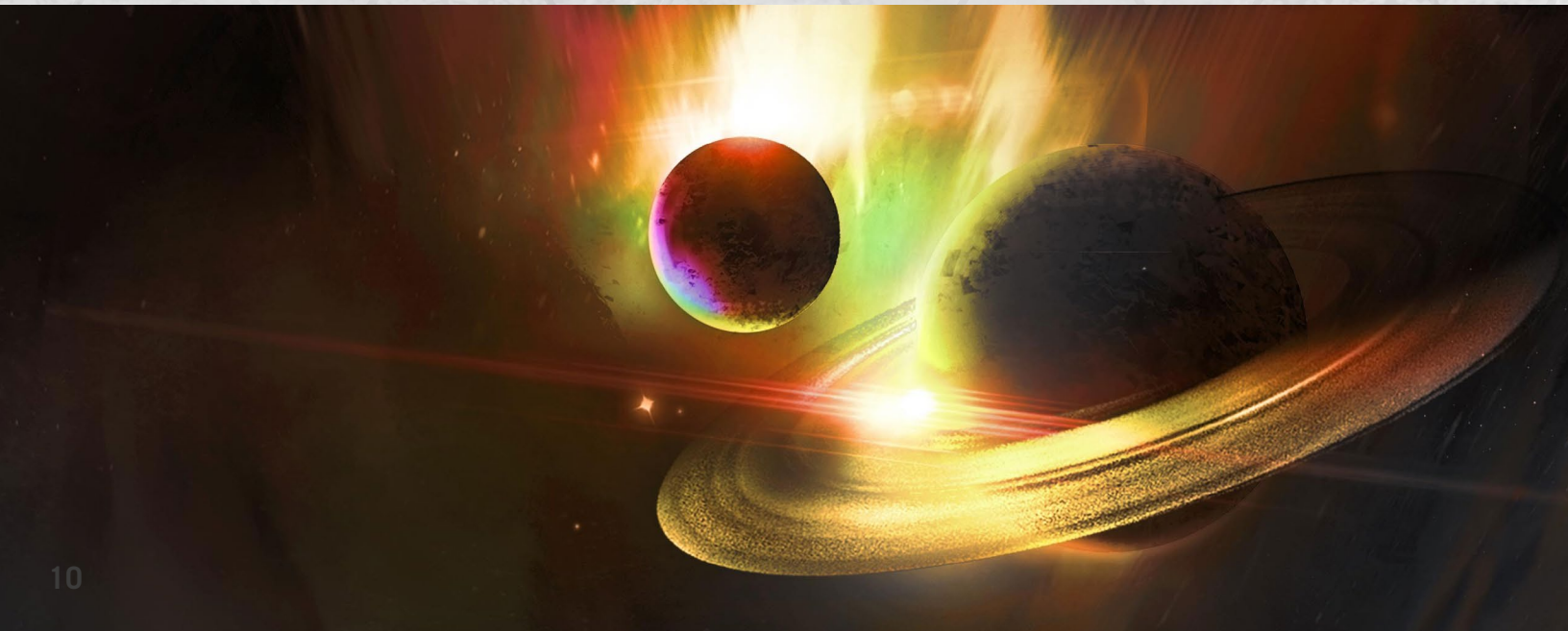
Recruitment

Recruitment	Average Max. Family Size
Failure	The recruitment draft is subpar. The crew may optionally reattempt the draft. Otherwise, virtually all candidates are 1–2 points below current CEI.
Success with Effect 0–3	The draft is successful but 40% of the draft below the current CEI, 40% on par with the current CEI and 20% slightly exceeding current CEI.
Success with Effect 4–5	The draft is successful with 20% below the current CEI, 60% on par with current CEI and 20% exceeding current CEI.
Success with Effect 6+	The draft is highly successful with only 10% of the recruited personnel below the current CEI, 60% on par with current CEI and 30% exceeding current CEI.

The Referee should feel free to abstract the recruitment process or engage in whatever level of detail is enjoyable. Personally recruiting that hotshot pilot or ace gunner might add flavour and enjoyment to a session and emphasise the importance of the replacement draft.

OBTAINING SUPPLIES

Despite its location on the frontier, supplies are plentiful at Mille Falcs. The naval base is the beneficiary of its location on an extensive jump-1 main and the proximity of the District 268 Ag Worlds Combine (AGC), a cartel of agricultural concerns that provides produce and foodstuffs for the region. Refer to Obtaining Supplies on page 32 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* for rules on resupplying the ship, adding DM+1 on any 'Going on the Scrounge' checks.



To determine the availability of supplies on the other worlds of District 268, refer to the Supplies table, reprised from previous naval adventures:

Supplies

Port Class	Supply Units Available	SU Per Day
A	2Dx10,000 (Average 70,000)	2Dx1,000
B	8Dx1,000 (Average 28,000)	8Dx100
C	2Dx1,000 (Average 7,000)	2Dx100
D	8Dx100 (Average 2,800)	8Dx10
E	2Dx100 (Average 700)	2Dx10

A capital ship at full capacity starts a cruise with approximately 100 days' worth of spares and supplies in its bays and lockers. Since the mission starts at Mille Falcs naval base, this gives the Logistics Officer an opportunity to resupply the ship; however, the officer in this role should keep in mind that the best Logistics Officers make judicious use of their available stores and try not to tax the navy too much. Promotion in the Crew department is rarely given to officers who constantly top off their supplies. In the eyes of the navy, the best officers are those who keep the ship running on adequate stores, using their Leadership skill to maintain morale during those periods when things are running short. Smartly using resources to purchase or trade for supplies in ports of call, even those without a naval base, is rewarded by the Admiralty with commendations for resourcefulness and frugality.

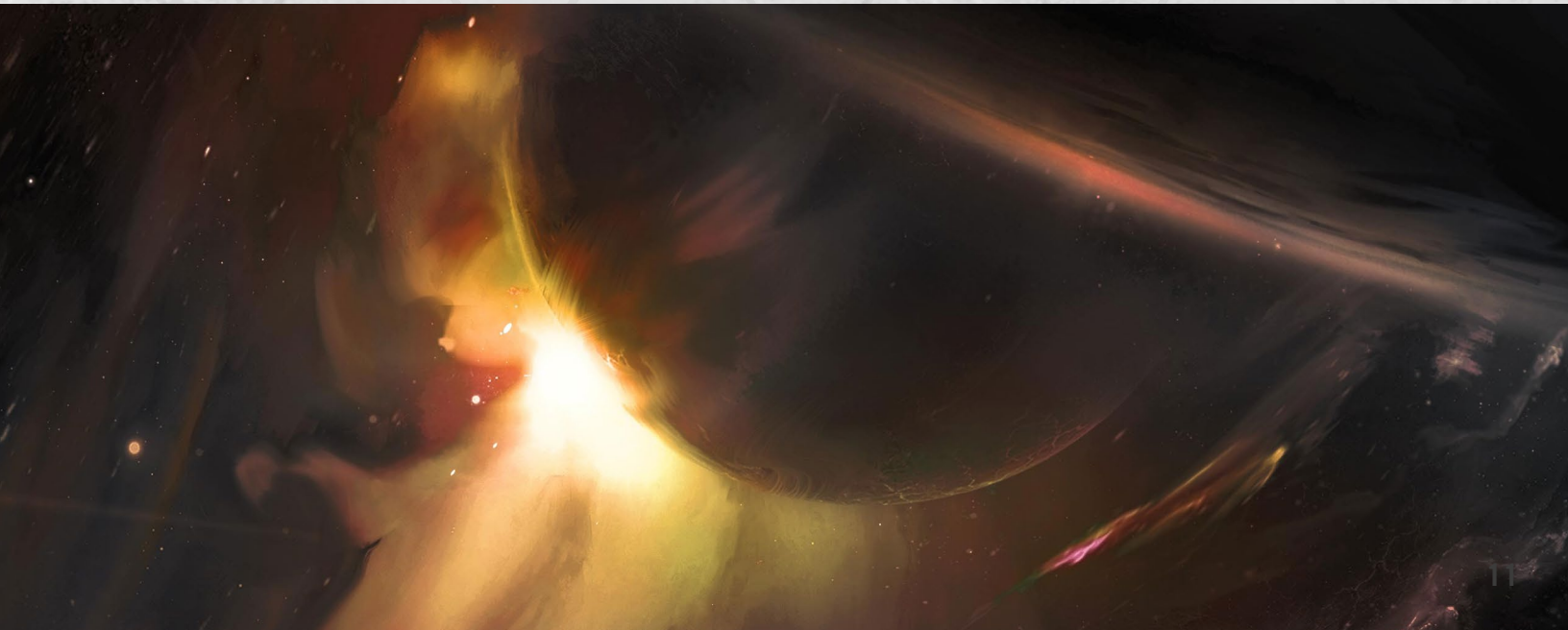
The mission into District 268 might well put a significant dent into the ship's stores depending on decisions made by its officer corps. Finding the pirate base is challenging and the ship might well find itself in the boonies and backwaters of the subsector for an extended period of time. Unless the captain wants to be forced back to a friendly port every time supplies begin to run low, they must rely on their Logistics Officer to obtain supplies wherever the ship finds itself. 'Going on the scrounge' is a part of most extended naval missions; in fact, doing so successfully is a mark of distinction for capital ships and their crews.

WELCOME TO THE FRONTIER

Before the Travellers are summoned to receive their next mission, several of them are greeted – some might say accosted – by naval personnel at Mille Falcs. Some of the things said to the Travellers include:

- *'So you pulled diplomatic duty, huh? What did you do to deserve that?'*
- From a mid-ranked naval officer: *'Not quite sure why the Admiralty is sending another mission there. The Collacians need to get it through their thick heads that when it's time, it's time, and not a second before.'*
- An old salt at the commissary: *'My grandmother was there when District 267 became the Five Sisters. It's a proud moment. You tell them Collacians that their time will come... and soon!'*
- *'They need to get their act together before we make 'em Imperials. Can't even handle a wee little world like Trexalon. You tell 'em to learn to stand on their own two feet and then... and only then... we'll bring 'em into the Imperium.'*

Everyone seems to have an opinion about Collace and District 268. Some are in favour and some are opposed to the annexation plans. The higher up the chain of command one gets, the more tight-lipped the officers become. The Travellers should get the sense that while theirs is not the first diplomatic mission to Collace, the assignment is an important one.



C H A P T E R - T H R E E

THE MISSION

Imperial Navy cruises, patrols and deployments to District 268 are common. There are 10 client states in the subsector, allies whom the Imperium has sworn to protect. Chief among them is Collace, the industrial powerhouse of the subsector that is expected to become its capital one day.

The Travellers' ship has been requested to execute a multifaceted mission into District 268, in which they must serve as diplomats, military advisors and finally as the war-fighting crew of a capital ship. There is a piracy problem in the subsector and the Imperial Navy is sending the Travellers' ship to deal with it. Whilst the Imperium considers interstellar piracy to be a blight upon civilisation, it is not cost-effective to dispatch an expensive naval vessel for every pirate incursion that is reported. The navy has made an exception in this case.

There is a great deal of intelligence collected by naval and scout forces in District 268 and there are times when all the noise can amount to static. A pirate attack here, an insurrection there, a trade disagreement on one system and coup d'état on another can add up to an overwhelming load of information. Metaphorically speaking, one of the primary goal of this mission is to provide an improved signal-to-noise ratio. The Travellers are being entrusted to find out what is going on in District 268 and then efficiently solve the problem.

WHEN MISSIONS CHANGE

The focal point of all naval adventures is the mission. The mission provides structure by clearly outlining criteria that the Travellers must accomplish. The degree of success that they achieve for each criterion adds up to an aggregate score that is used to determine the success of the overall mission.

Despite the need for the navy to impose order where there is chaos, the universe is a fluid and dynamic place. Events transpire around the Travellers as they delve into the frontier. As they go from world-to-world, things they might have taken for granted transform into something else right before their eyes. Imperial Navy officers must be nimble and independent. The method of travel between the stars is the jump drive and transmission of information between systems is limited by the speed of jump. What is assumed to be true back in one star system can be proven false by the time a ship comes out of jump a few parsecs away. Naval officers do not have the ability to call home to the Admiralty to ask for new orders when this happens and they are expected to make adjustments on the fly. This does not mean that mission criteria are always open to interpretation. On the contrary, changes to a mission must be considered carefully. The Admiralty expects its ship captains to follow orders unless there are indisputable reasons not to.

Such is the case with this mission. The Travellers are put in the unenviable position of seeing a mission unfold before them in unexpected ways and they must be prepared to change course. On the one hand, they have their mission objectives, a checklist of criteria by which their performance will be measured. On the other, they have a duty to carry out the will of the Imperial Navy. Sometimes duty clashes with the original objectives of a mission. Woe to the naval officers who do not recognise these winds of change and fail to adjust accordingly.

MILLE FALCS/DISTRICT 268: ADVISORY MISSION TO COLLACE

Dear Captain,

The Imperium has nearly reached the limits of its abilities to peacefully expand. In the Spinward Marches we share borders with the Zhodani Consulate, Vargr Extents and several smaller states. A scant two subsectors away – in the Trojan Reach – is the Aslan Hierate, with whom we have a long-standing treaty and agreed-upon buffer zone. Barring an offensive into neutral territory or a major war with another power, our abilities to grow have been stifled.

There are exceptions, of course. The Imperium currently administers worlds in 13 of the 16 subsectors in the Marches, including a small presence in District 268. The Plankwell Project proposes to annex most of its worlds, essentially making it an Imperial subsector. There are currently two Imperial worlds and 10 client states present, so the ground has been laid for annexation. Collace is the presumed pick to become subsector capital should we decide to move forward.

At one point in time it was full steam ahead with the annexation but we have since grown more cautious. Political problems near the sector capital and instability in District 268 have given us pause. Collace is engaged in a cold war against Trexalon, an independent world with a decidedly anti-Imperial bent. Trexalon has made its position clear; stay out or there will be trouble. While we certainly have the power to bring them to heel, the Imperium does not want to become involved in a quagmire when there are already problems elsewhere. Furthermore, we must remember that we are highly dependent on Capital. We cannot send a message to the Emperor that we are carelessly becoming involved in conflicts that we can avoid. Nevertheless, we have political allegiances to keep up and the navy is an instrument to that end.

You are requested and required to show the flag on Collace, engaging in all the pomp and circumstance which that entails, and then to accompany the Collace Planetary Navy on a joint operation, at first in an advisory capacity. There have been rumblings that a piracy problem has emerged – for which Collace has been quick to blame Trexalon – and our assistance to put it down has been invited. Lend what assistance you can and, if possible, determine the source of the attacks. After meeting with the CPN, develop a suitable plan and execute it. This mission is open ended and you have discretion to go where you must in order to achieve your objectives. In the end, we expect to have continued good relations with Collace but we do not seek to disturb the current balance of power in the subsector. You must tread a fine line on this one.

The Admiralty recognises that this mission is open ended and might require some time to complete; however, the operation of a capital ship is expensive and we want the ship at Mille Falcs after a set period of time. The mission is expected to take between three and five months. Should you fail to return to Mille Falcs within the prescribed period of time, the mission will be suspended and a squadron of destroyer escorts sent to recover you. I urge you to avoid letting that happen. After you have completed the mission, return to Mille Falcs for debriefing.

Commodore Elisia Andormii, Commanding Officer,
100th Fleet, 16th Provisional Task Force

ADVISORY ROLE

At the outset, the Travellers are to participate in a strictly advisory role. These are not Imperial worlds – not yet anyway – and the navy does not want to impinge upon their ability to defend themselves and impress policy in whatever way they see fit. Getting involved in conflicts on their home turf sets a precedent that the Imperium wants to avoid. Outside the boundaries of the client states, in the neutral and hostile systems, the navy may use force with discretion and may defend itself as necessary. After all, turning tail and running from a fight can establish another kind of precedent that the navy wishes to avoid.

INTELLIGENCE REPORT

The so-called cold war between Collace and Trexalon has reached a fever pitch. The two systems have established a trade embargo on each other and are forcing other systems in the region to pick sides in the conflict. Commerce raiding and terrorist attacks are rumoured to be in the offing but there is little proof that either side has directly assaulted the other in so brazen a fashion. What is known is that there has been an increasing number of pirate attacks in the subsector, mostly in the neutral systems but lately extending into the client states.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Travellers are expected to maintain communication with the Admiralty via the naval and scout bases in the subsector. They may also use the Imperial Express Boat system to send encrypted messages from any client states they visit. When not in a client state system, the Travellers may use unsanctioned communication methods (for example, free traders or subsidised merchants with mail arrays) for any non-confidential messages.

MISSION SUCCESS CRITERIA

Five mission success criteria are described below. See the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* for more information about Mission Success Indicators (MSI). The referee must determine the Travellers' success using the guidelines presented here.

Criterion 1

Travel to Collace, meet with local officials and engage in a showing of the flag. Send a confidential x-boat communique to Mille Falcs, ascertaining the current state of affairs on Collace.

Importance: Routine

Complete Success (MSI +2): Collace is accustomed to visits from the Imperium. In fact, the Imperial Navy has a near constant presence in the system despite the fact that there is no naval base there. Collace is a staunch ally of the Imperium and will make many demands of the Travellers. The constant barrage of entreaties and requests might try the Travellers' patience but in the role of diplomat they must be patient, consistent and conciliatory without making any promises. To achieve Complete Success on this criterion, the Travellers must perform flawlessly in this capacity.

Partial Success (MSI +1): The Travellers might or might not have training in the art of diplomacy but ultimately they are war-fighting naval officers, not members of the diplomatic corps; it might be difficult to maintain the façade at times. After several encounters with obsequious officials and hangers-on, they might have one slip-up in which their patience wore thin. A single event of this nature reduces them to Partial Success. The Admiralty will forgive the transgression but not without mention.

Marginal Success (MSI +0): As above but the Travellers have two or three slip-ups, losses of temper, breaches of protocol or other failures to carry out their diplomatic role with aplomb. The Admiralty expresses significant displeasure at the Travellers' lack of sensitivity and censures them for the transgressions.

Failure (MSI –2): '*By the stars, I'm a veteran of the Fourth Frontier War and a fighting naval officer, not some pompous emissary to the backwater!*' Failure results from a complete lack of understanding of the role they were meant to take. Four or more transgressions, especially if one is a major breach of protocol such as missing a state dinner or similar event, results in complete failure and a severe tongue lashing from the Admiralty.

Criterion 2

Escort the CPN on a pirate-hunting mission, serving in an advisory role. Report on the readiness and expertise of the CPN to the Admiralty.

Importance: Important

Complete Success (MSI +2): Whilst many worlds in the Imperium have their own planetary navies – and are allowed to operate under their own charters – Collace is an Imperial client state that seeks to become not only a full-fledged member of the Imperium but subsector capital. As such, they are held to a higher standard and the Travellers are expected to ascertain their readiness and evaluate their naval culture. The Travellers must not only serve as advisors but play the somewhat more sensitive role of observer.

Complete success may be achieved by treading the difficult line of participation without engaging in too active a role. They should also strive to identify the size and scope of the navy's operational sphere. Recent intelligence suggests that the CPN has begun to conduct operations outside its own star system but intelligence is not built on hearsay. The Travellers must find out the details for themselves.

Complete Success may be awarded if the Travellers participate in joint exercises with the CPN, being careful not to influence their actions too much. Applying too heavy a hand will prevent the Travellers from discovering who the CPN really are. They must also provide a crisp and comprehensive report to the Admiralty.

Partial Success (MSI +1): The dichotomy of Imperial Naval philosophy, patrolling the space between stars without interfering in local affairs, is drummed into most Imperial Navy officers. For that reason, a less intrusive report will be tolerated. At the debriefing, the Travellers are likely to be grilled on all of the facets described under Complete Success. The Admiralty expresses disappointment at anything less than a thorough review but if a strong effort was made, they will excuse it and grant Partial Success. In addition, while the Travellers are expected to be participants in CPN operations, if they apply too heavy a hand on one or two occasions – taking over certain aspects of the operation or influencing CPN behaviour – they can only achieve Partial Success.

Marginal Success (MSI +0): Should the Travellers take a standoffish approach to evaluating the CPN, perhaps even failing to inspect any of their ships or watching them in action during patrol, they might be granted Marginal Success. At least one of the factors described under Complete Success must be reported upon by the Travellers. In addition, if the Travellers get too heavily involved in CPN operations three or more times, Marginal Success is the best they can achieve.

Failure (MSI –2): An incomplete or nigh-incomplete report results in grave disappointment from the Admiralty and a severe dressing down: '*By Plankwell's bones, captain! Did you even go to Collace? Where were you and your staff? I hope not drinking at the startown the entire time.*' Part of this criteria is simply being able to compare the traditions and methods of the Imperial Navy with that of the CPN. Inability to do so makes the Admiralty wonder if the Travellers know anything about either one. Failure might also result from heavily involving themselves in the operation when they were strictly ordered to maintain an advisory role.

Criterion 3

Determine the source of the pirate attacks.

Importance: Important

Complete Success (MSI +2): Investigating the systems of District 268 will not be easy. Figuratively speaking, it is an uneven landscape with star systems falling into the three camps described in the Overview on page 31. Determining the source of the attacks requires interaction with worlds from at least two of the three camps. A complete picture can only be obtained by investigating all three. Complete Success comes from collecting Intelligence Events and evaluating them accurately and efficiently. There is a time component to this criterion as well. The Travellers must meet the following three standards to achieve Complete Success.

- Obtain the needed information from four or fewer star systems.
- Consume less than 60 days doing it.
- Avoid messy entanglements and conflicts.

If the Travellers leave a mess in their wake during this phase of the mission – infuriated governments, animosity with the locals, scorched earth from an orbital or marine assault – then Complete Success is not attainable.

Partial Success (MSI +1): The Travellers discover the source of the attacks, as described above, but the following caveats apply.

- They obtain the needed information from visits to 5–6 star systems.
- Consume less than 90 days doing it.
- Avoid messy entanglements and conflicts for the most part but have one dust-up that leaves a bit of a bad aftertaste; they offend a local politician, get into a fight or something else of that nature.

Marginal Success (MSI +0): There are a number of conflicting rumours about where the purported pirate base might be and the Travellers become side tracked. Should they end up on the wrong track for a while but ultimately discover the actual location of the base, they may achieve Marginal Success. In addition, this implies the following:

- The number of star systems visited is not relevant – though probably in the range of 7–9 systems – but should they get back on track and find the pirate base eventually, they can petition for Marginal Success.
- Consume less than 120 days doing it.
- Two or three entanglements or conflicts occur, some of which might need some cleaning up.

Failure (MSI –2): Failure means any one of the following things:

- The Travellers never find the pirate base.
- Whether or not they find the base, they take more than the allotted five months to do it.
- They cause four or more entanglements or conflicts and lengthy, troublesome clean-up will be required by a follow-up naval mission.

Criterion 4

In a joint operation with the CPN, suppress or eliminate the pirate threat by appropriate means.

Importance: Critical

Complete Success (MSI +4): Suppression or elimination of the pirate threat can take a number of forms. The most obvious of these is the destruction of the pirate base, which resolves this criterion but may cause other complications. They might also devise a way to draw most or all of the pirate starships into a series of traps. Elimination of their ships suppresses or ends the threat. A third possibility is addressing the cause of the piracy issue itself. Contacting and making inroads with the pirates will not be easy but diplomatically oriented Travellers might be willing to put in the work. The increase of piracy in District 268 is the direct result of problems in the Five Sisters subsector. Addressing these problems will take time but might have a more lasting effect than simply destroying starships and secret bases. Travellers who choose the diplomatic method are likely to be given a reprieve for going over the time limit. See When Missions Change on page 12.

Partial Success (MSI +2): Pirates are elusive and not easy to corral into one star system for easy elimination. If the Travellers do not devise a strategy that effectively suppresses or destroys the operation, then they cannot claim Complete Success. However, destroying a large number of pirate ships and at least identifying, partially incapacitating or finding another method of waylaying the pirate base earns them Partial Success.

Marginal Success (MSI +1): The elimination of several pirate ships and identifying the system where the pirate base is hidden – without actually finding the base itself – earns the Travellers Marginal Success. This will doubtless require a follow-up mission by more capable pirate hunters.

Failure (MSI –8): When a capital ship arrives in system, the rats scurry into their holes. If the Travellers find themselves being eluded repeatedly by the pirates and manage to incapacitate few or none of their starships and, in addition, they fail to find or incapacitate the pirate base, then abject Failure is the result.

Criterion 5

Deliver a report to Naval Command on Mille Falcs, assessing the status of District 268, Collace and the viability of going forward with the Plankwell Project.

Importance: Important

Complete Success (MSI +2): The mission takes the Travellers to many star systems in District 268. Over the course of their cruise, they should visit client states, neutral worlds and possibly even hostile worlds. Their report to the Admiralty should include the following.

- The status of Collace, including a description of the system's relations with its neighbours, military readiness and economic environment.

- An overview of the client states in the rimward portion of the subsector or current data on at least two other client state worlds.
- The status of the neutral worlds: Determine if there is significant resistance to the annexation, hardships that need to be addressed and whether Collace is likely to be a factor in drawing them into the fold.
- The status of the hostile worlds: Determine the source of their animus towards the Imperium and if there are prospects for peace.

Partial Success (MSI +1): A reasonably comprehensive report that covers at least half of the topics described above can earn the Travellers Partial Success. It should be noted that the Travellers are being asked to provide a subjective opinion on what they have seen in District 268. If they are unwilling to go out on a limb and present their opinions, the Admiralty will smell fear and indecision. The navy is not a place for weak resolve and waffling. Their best bet is to formulate a cohesive narrative that provides the Imperium with actionable intelligence.

Marginal Success (MSI +0): Some Travellers are going to be uncomfortable under the bright lights of the Admiralty interrogation and might present an incoherent or inconclusive description of the events they have witnessed. If only mildly actionable intelligence is given and the Travellers cover only one or two of the bullet points, then Marginal Success is the best they can hope for.

Failure (MSI –2): A fully incoherent report from the Travellers, possibly including conflicting accounts from each of the Travellers with no actionable intelligence and little information about any of the bullet points results in Failure. The Admiralty will have second thoughts about sending the Travellers on future missions that require a degree of shrewdness and candour.

C H A P T E R - F O U R

COLLACE

The arrival of the Travellers' ship is an expected event and the world's luminaries are out in force to receive them. An honour guard of CPN starships guides them toward Collace Highport where the Travellers are scheduled to meet with members of the Elected Council and their chief executive, Prime Designate Dahlia Mourcousi. On the way in from the 100-diameter limit, the Travellers note that Collace's principal moon, Kirkton, has been decorated with an immense laser-illuminated image of the Imperial Sunburst to celebrate their arrival.

After disembarking, the Travellers are met by a small delegation from the planetary government led by one Modri Capulen, an amiable young man who takes care to address their every need before proceeding. Although the tour of the highport is a bit scripted, Capulen gives the Travellers ample time to investigate and ask questions about anything they see.

Referee's Note

The Travellers' activities in the Collace system include several events. The Referee may optionally guide them through each of the events sequentially or the group may be divided to cover several tasks at once including diplomacy with Collacian officials, obtaining Intelligence Events, engaging in joint exercises with the CPN and possibly even spending some time with Scout Service personnel. Naval adventures feature Travellers in a variety of ranks and roles and this adventure is designed with the flexibility to keep the group together or split them up as desired. If the latter is chosen, the Travellers will be required to reconvene before the events described in Into the Outer Zone on page 28.

The highport is a well-designed, aesthetically pleasing, high-tech facility with all the amenities one would expect to find on a subsector capital of the Spinward Marches… everything that is, except a shipyard that can produce jump-capable spacecraft. Collace Highport can provide full maintenance services for starships but its shipyard only manufactures sublight craft. Despite its modern appearance, parts of the highport seem unfinished but Capulen informs the Travellers that this is due to its modular design. Collace expects to add new wings to the highport once certain political obstacles are overcome.

The tour takes the Travellers to a newly appointed section of the highport where the foundation has been laid for upgrades that will one day make it a Class A facility. All Collace is waiting for are the investment Credits to make it happen, which it expects to receive after being made capital.

The tour ends at the access portals to the IISS module of the highport. The IISS module appears to encompass a goodly portion of the highport's tonnage. Capulen mentions that the highport's modular design enables the easy addition of new sections and that Collace would happily add one for the Imperial Navy should the opportunity arise.

After the tour, the Travellers are escorted to the surface of the planet either aboard pinnaces from their own ship or shuttles provided by Collace. On the trip down, the Travellers see evidence that Collace is a well-defended world, with hundreds of automated missile and laser defences emplaced in orbit as well as a large system defence boat and patrol corvette fleet. They also happen upon one of the CPN's recommissioned destroyers, which is in surprisingly good shape considering that it was acquired by Collace only after serving a long career in the Imperial Navy. If asked about this, their guide points out that the shipyard in the Binges system is expert at performing refits.

As they descend to the surface, they see that the world is a cold and uninviting place. Most of the planet is covered in large oceans with only two small continents and dozens of extensive archipelagos jutting out from beneath the seas. Much of the water is frozen and covered in glaciers; however, the combination of the planet's proximity to its two stars, a somewhat eccentric orbit, active volcanism and frequent tectonic activity breaks and melts the ice, creating random regions of open ocean. Collace has an unbreathable, very thin and tainted atmosphere and temperatures far below what is comfortable for humans. The taint is a mixture of toxic gases, primarily sulphur dioxide emitted from its dozens of active volcanos. Most of the world's one billion citizens live in large domed habitats, undersea arcologies and orbital space stations.

Collace Downport is adjacent to Cavert, the capital city of Collace. The city is located in the central valley of the planet's largest continent. Immense mountain ranges may be seen a few kilometres from the cluster of domes. The domes of Cavert allow filtered light and heat from the system's binary pair to enter the city, giving its denizens the feeling of a more natural existence. Earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis are frequent on Collace but the transparent latticed polycarbonate used to build its domes is resistant to the quakes. In addition, antigrav technology is used to minimise the shaking so that Collacians scarcely know that earthquakes are occurring unless they see reports on the news feeds.

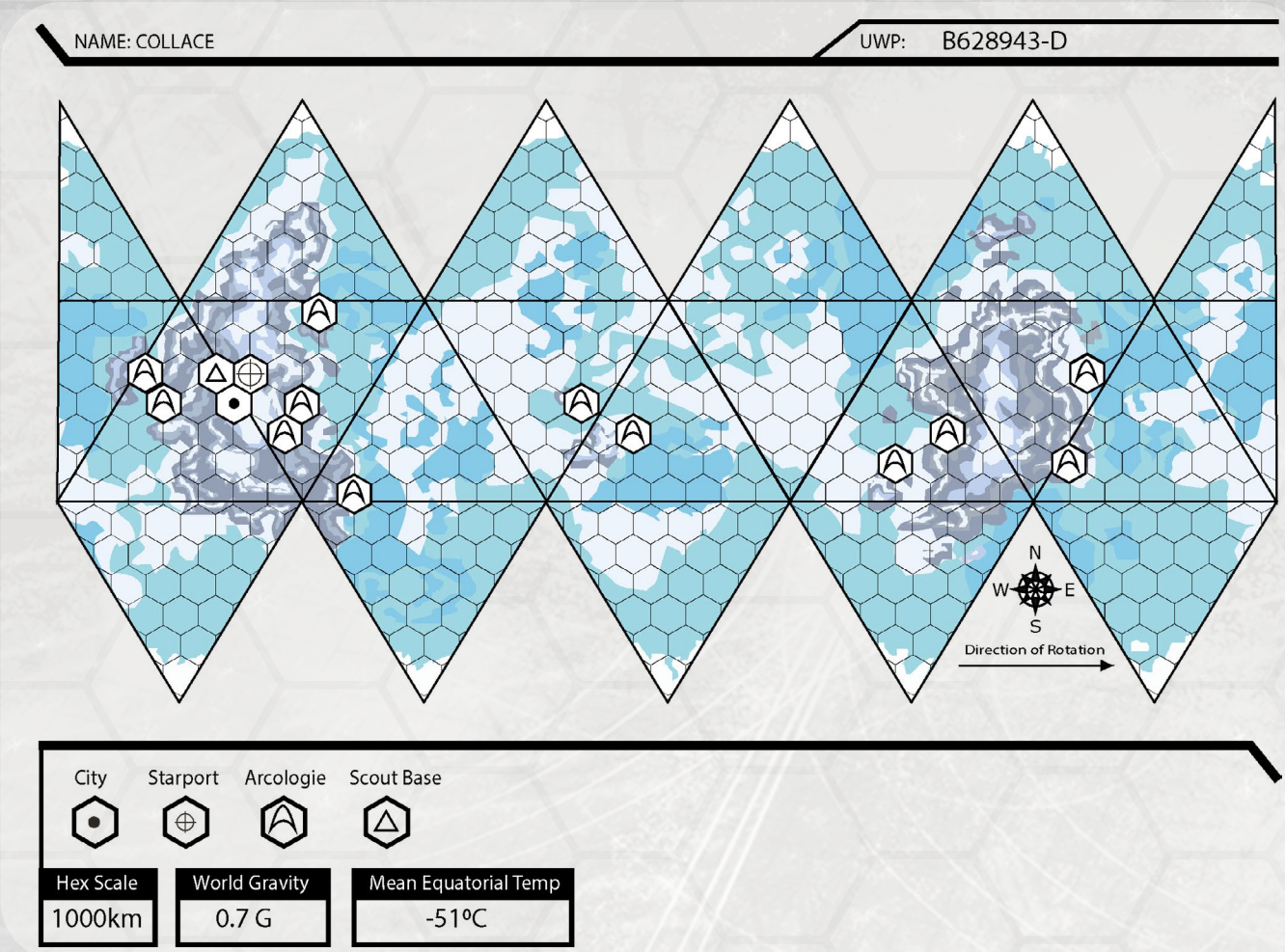
Antigrav on such a massive scale – even if it is only for inertial compensation and not full gravitic support – is expensive, which has resulted in a number of secondary adaptations. Like most high-tech worlds, fusion is the primary source of energy but auxiliary power systems are also present, the first of which are large and cheap stellar energy collectors placed next to most of its cities; Collace's very thin atmosphere and weak magnetic field do little to deflect stellar radiation so it makes sense to take advantage of this. Collace also obtains geothermal energy from its many volcanos. Finally, many of its cities are built on the world's older and more resilient glaciers, those less likely to ablate and sublimate under the mercurial effects of its two stars.

After making planetfall, the Travellers are taken through Collace Downport, a large facility that sees a great deal of traffic. They see that the starport is expanding and there are large cranes and gravitic construction vehicles present. Their guide begs. 'Please excuse the construction. We just can't seem to keep up with demand. We see more traffic and industrial growth with each passing year.'

Amidst a large security force, the Travellers are escorted to a maglev train which takes, them through the startown and into the heart of the city.

PARTY LIKE IT'S 1099

During the maglev ride to the capitol building, the Travellers see more of what Cavert has to offer. Not everything is bright shining lights and industry. There is poverty and evidence of a large underclass, the labour force who operate and maintain the planet's robotic factories where high-tech, low-cost goods are made for shipment into the rest of the Marches. There are many public facilities; a centre for performing arts, a children's history museum, numerous sports venues and large parks complete with imported flora and fauna. All are sponsored by one corporation or other but most feature the name SuSAG or McClellan Factors, the



two dominant corporations on the planet. The Gustav Schunamann Opera House (named for SuSAG's founder) is the centrepiece of the city.

The Travellers are given the opportunity to stop and see one or two of the city's many sights but are eventually taken to the city's luxurious Travellers' Aid Society (TAS) hostel, back in the startown where the Council has set up accommodations for them. They have several hours to get settled before grav limousines take them downtown for a reception at the Imperial Grand Ballroom, a large public venue where the city's wealthy industrialists, Collacian politicians, high-ranking military officers and other public personalities come out for a night of drinking, dancing and merriment.

During the course of the evening, the Travellers have the opportunity to meet some of Collace's power brokers. Use the following encounters:

- Oondor Bravis, Regional Executive, SuSAG – *'It isn't in SuSAG's interests to see the annexation go any further than Collace itself. Let the rest remain independent.'*
- Bravis' point of view is fairly typical of SuSAG execs. After all, why would SuSAG want the Imperium annexing worlds where they have psionic drug and chemical and biological warfare (CBW) weapons factories put there for the very reason that they are *not* Imperial worlds?
- Factor Maadvel Alourj, McClellan Factors – '*Things are just fine as they are but frankly, McClellan couldn't give a fig whether the annexation happens or not. We're ready to compete with any Imperial line that comes into the District. We've established a solid position in these systems.'*
- Alouri seems to want to provoke the Travellers during his chat with them. McClellan sees itself as above the petty dictates of the Imperium or anyone else. Any chance to spout off against naval personnel – whom he sees as Imperial messenger boys – he takes with glee.
- Volori Bisenbaddam, Councillor, Cavert District – '*These worlds need Imperial control and Collace is prepared to be the agent of that control. It completes the Imperium's holdings in the sector, puts more of the Spinward Main under Imperial control where it should be and what's more it finally puts a real link to the Five Sisters.*'

Everything Bisenbaddam says is true but just describing astrography is not exactly inspiring. How does he *really* feel? Perhaps the Travellers can find out.

The Travellers at the reception hear arguments like this all night and are expected to engage any and all comers in conversation. If the Travellers stake out a position, let them roleplay it; otherwise, have them make a Difficult (10+) Diplomat check for each prolonged encounter. However, if they should fail a check, allow other Travellers to come in and save the day. The reception is a festive environment, not a meeting of the Imperial Moot. A dashing Imperial Navy officer who makes a successful Average (8+) Carouse check – or something similar – can come in and sweep a politician or corporate officer off their feet for a dance or get them to the bar for several shots of Collacian brandy.

The reception is an opportunity for the Travellers to see how politically unsettled the frontier is. Draw them into the conversation and allow them to have opinions. The Collacians would certainly like to know where they stand.

SISTER SERVICE

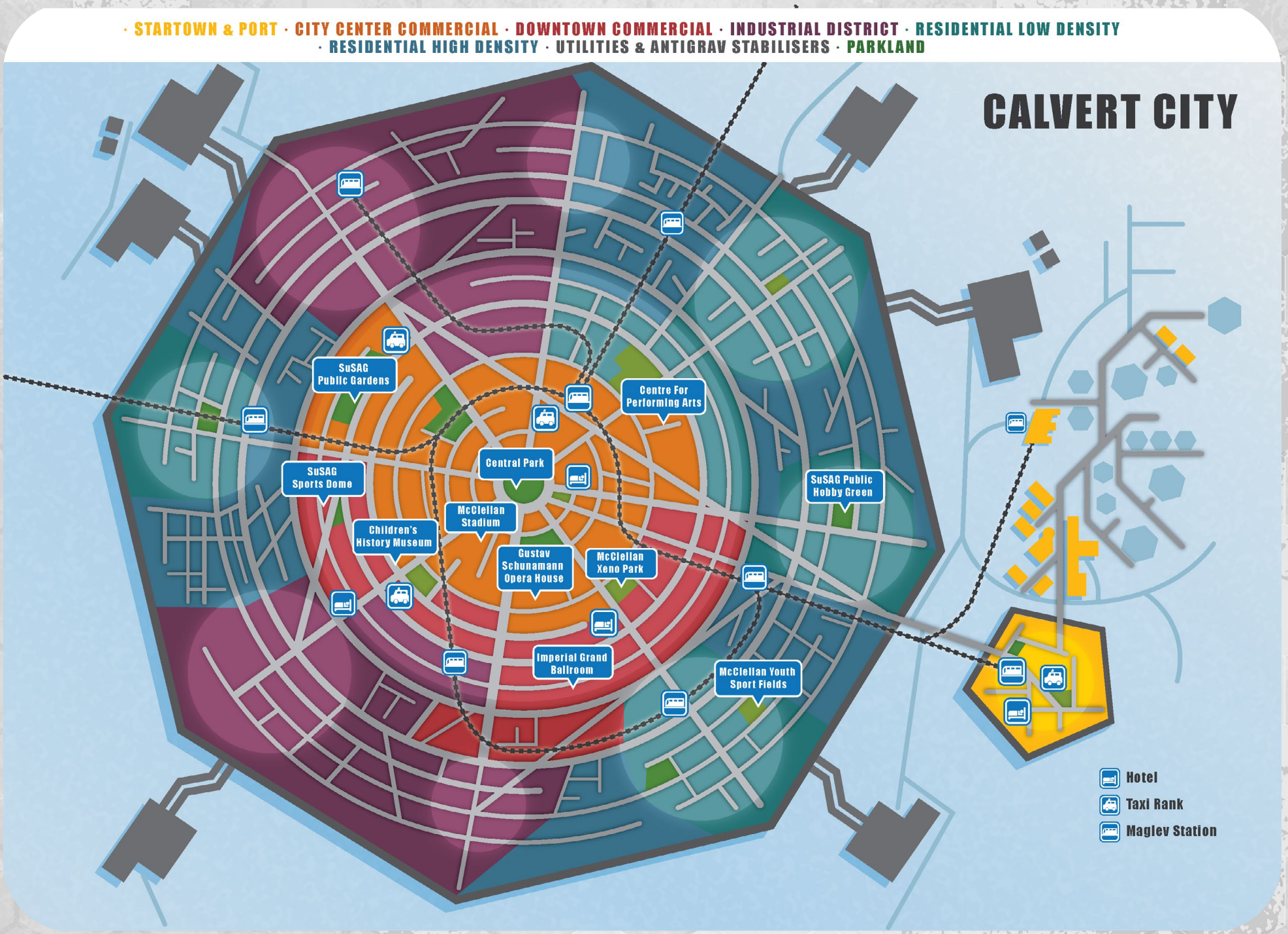
Collace is host to an impressive IISS base, including facilities on the surfaces of Collace and its moon Kirkton, as well as several orbital space stations. All three branches of the Scout Service are represented here: Survey, Communications and Exploration. If the Travellers interacted with the scouts on Mille Falcs and the experience was a positive one, word gets to Collace and the scouts are highly cooperative with the Travellers. Award them with DM+1 on the Intelligence Events table if this is the case.

INTELLIGENCE EVENTS

As described in the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*, the Travellers should make an Average (8+) Investigate check to generate an Intelligence Event, adjusting the accuracy of information they obtain based on the Effect of the roll. If none of the Travellers have the Investigate skill, someone on their ship will. Use the ship's ECEI to determine the skill level of the crewmember who has it. The Travellers may generate one Intelligence Event per Mission Segment. Note that their visit to Collace encompasses two Mission Segments – one in Cavert and one while serving as advisors to the CPN – so they have two opportunities to generate an Intelligence Event while in system. Roll 2D on the Collace and Client States Intelligence Events table to determine what they discover. Results of 10+ come directly from the Intel staff of the Travellers' ship in the form of reports obtained from an analysis of the region.

Collace and Client States Intelligence Events

2D	Intelligence
0–2	CPN starships have been on patrol in neighbouring systems. Some have bristled at their intrusive presence. Higher Effect reveals that the CPN has largely limited its patrols to as far coreward as Noctocol and as far rimward as Motmos (leapfrogging Trexalon, of course). They have strictly avoided going into Avastan or Inchin for some reason.
2–4	The shipyards on Binges have gone bankrupt and been bailed out by several investment banks and private investors. In an effort to become profitable, Binges has become increasingly willing to build ships for just about any customer, including possible raiders and pirates. Higher Effect puts the Travellers in touch with someone on their payroll who can give greater detail about the recipients of the ships.
5–7	McClellan has been sending Leviathan merchant cruisers into the backwaters of the subsector. They have sent missions into Egyrn and the Five Sisters as well, passing through the Inchin and Avastan colonies on their way. Higher Effect results in greater detail about the regions described, most of which are detailed later in this adventure.
8–9	SuSAG has been investing heavily in District 268. A great deal of manufacturing equipment has been shipped to Collace and Tarsus, yet corporate facilities on both worlds do not appear to have been expanded. Just where the investment Credits are going is a bit of a mystery.
10–11	The cold war has been heating up between Collace and Trexalon but there is no direct proof that Trexalon is involved in the recent slate of pirate activity. It may well be coming from somewhere else. Higher Effect reveals rumours that Trexalon has also been victimised by pirates of late. Not surprisingly, Collace denies being involved.
12+	Trade revenue from the Five Sisters has suffered a sharp decline in recent months. Markedly fewer trading ships have been passing through the Tarsus gateway to the rest of the subsector. Something must be impeding their progress.


· STARTOWN & PORT · CITY CENTER COMMERCIAL · DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL · INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT · RESIDENTIAL LOW DENSITY
· RESIDENTIAL HIGH DENSITY · UTILITIES & ANTIGRAV STABILISERS · PARKLAND
CALVERT CITY
SuSAG Public Gardens
Centre For Performing Arts
Central Park
SuSAG Sports Dome
SuSAG Public Hobby Green
McClellan Stadium
Children's History Museum
Gustav Schunamann Opera House
McClellan Xeno Park
Imperial Grand Ballroom
McClellan Youth Sport Fields
Hotel
Taxi Rank
Maglev Station

C H A P T E R - F I V E

JOINT EXERCISES

Shortly after their arrival in system, the Travellers are invited to participate in joint exercises with the CPN. This affords the Travellers the opportunity to complete their second Mission Segment. They are escorted to Wallen Ridley, the CPN's largest naval base, where they have the opportunity to inspect the facilities.

At Ridley, they are greeted by Rear Admiral Leander Vicente, who takes them on a brief tour of the base. Admiral Vicente is quite open to discussing the practices of the CPN and may reveal some of the following information, depending on the Travellers' questions.

- The CPN fleet consists of STL and jump-capable ships. The STL component includes several squadrons of SDBs and deployment shuttles. The jump-capable ships include a squadron of Gazelle close escorts and patrol corvettes and two recommissioned destroyers.
- The CPN patrols neighbouring systems to expunge them of the *'blight of Trexalonian smugglers and pirates*,' as he puts it.
- The culture of the CPN is quite different from that of the Imperial Navy and reflects the frontier mentality of District 268.

The Travellers are invited to go on patrol with a squadron of CPN spacecraft. The squadron is commanded by Commander Elmore Vinsen, a rakishly handsome and bold naval officer who is eager to impress them. He informs them that their capital ship will not be required; in fact, it might hinder the operation. Capital ships emit an enormous signal and tend to cause pirates to run for their lives. The purpose of the mission is to round them up and… deal with them… not to scare them off. Travellers who participate in this Mission Segment are expected to actually crew CPN craft or similar craft from their capital ship, whichever they prefer. Should the Travellers insist on including their capital ship in the operation, Vinsen relents but urges them to stand off and use long-range sensors.

The CPN have been active and are fresh from the fight. Referees should give them an Effective CEI of 8–10, which might very well be above that of the Travellers' crew. When commanding their own personnel during the joint exercises, the Travellers should make a few Average (8+) Leadership checks to enhance morale and ensure that the detachment they assign are keeping up with the highly motivated CPN. It would be an embarrassment for the Imperial Navy to be outperformed by members of a provincial planetary navy.

THE CPN WAY

Cultures on the frontier have a different feel to them than that of the Imperium. Despite the fact that it is a high-population, industrial world, Collace very much exhibits a frontier mentality and nowhere is this more apparent than within the CPN.

Collace is a boom town. Riches can be made if you make the right contacts and get into the right businesses. For some this path is employment with SuSAG, McClellan Factors or another of the corporations that dominate the system. For others, entrepreneurialism is the way, creating a tech export business, a natural resource exploitation firm or a service business that addresses the needs of colonists and commercial ships. Many make their fortune plying the Spinward Main in a free trader or subsidised merchant. A career in the military is more of a detour than a path to riches and for that reason, certain perks have been made available to CPN crews. Among these is the ability to take prize ships during pirate and smuggler hunting operations. Crews are allowed to claim captured spacecraft and other assets taken from pirates and smugglers as salvage to be broken down for parts or entire ships sold on the secondary market. Because of this, CPN officers are often as skilled at Admin and Broker as they are at Tactics (naval) and Leadership.

The practice of taking prize ships is controversial but the CPN sees it as a necessary adaptation to attract talented and motivated personnel. During the joint exercises, the Travellers get to see this practice in action. They see how the thrill of the hunt energises a crew. Chatter about how many Credits they will make is just as common as other forms of 'shop talk' typical on a naval spacecraft.

This portion of the mission cannot be abstracted simply and represents opportunity for an adventure. Referees will have to determine where the Travellers fit into the CPN in their advisory roles. For their part, the CPN are honoured to have the Imperial Navy along and are eager to enlist the participation of the Travellers in various roles on their spacecraft. A spirit of competition arises during the operation, with CPN spacers trying to one up or teach their Imperial cohorts a thing or two about patrolling and pirate hunting. The Travellers should get a sense of this and must choose whether or not to answer the bell. Note that the CPN are not nasty or condescending about it but they are eager to show that they are every bit as worthy of wearing a naval uniform as their Imperial brethren.

The CPN musters a task force of four 200-ton SDBs, four deployment shuttles, one Gazelle close escort and one patrol corvette. The CPN opens up to 12 positions for the Travellers to occupy on their spacecraft. This includes roles in flight, engineering, gunnery and marine. Refer to Forming a Detachment on page 15 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* to assist with this Mission Segment. Be sure to determine the Detachment Efficiency Index (DEI) of the naval personnel who participate in the operation. Note that the CPN have vacated roles for the Travellers' crew so the operation will be affected by the quality of the chosen participants.

The hunt takes place at Enborne, the system's gas giant, but may continue to distant Hali if certain facts are discovered. During the hunt, the Travellers witness some or all of the following events depending on how active a role they take and how closely they observe events.

- The race to claim prize ships that have been defeated in battle.
- Innocent ship crews are sometimes inspected aggressively in an effort to determine that they are pirates or smugglers. The CPN has a review board that punishes crews who 'get it wrong' and take a prize from an innocent crew but it still happens from time-to-time.
- The excitement and infighting that sometimes occurs over who gets credit and thus who can lay claim to a prize. Competing crews have nearly come to blows at times but there are no accounts of CPN ships firing upon one another… no recorded ones, anyway.
- The spacing of pirates. If CPN marines encounter stiff resistance during boarding actions, the practice of having pirates 'walk the plank' out of an airlock is not unknown.
- Should the Travellers participate in an attack or boarding action, they are offered a share of the prize. A Traveller can expect to make Cr10,000-100,000 depending on the size of the prize. This might get them into trouble, of course, but the CPN does not know that. On the other hand, not accepting their share of a prize might be construed as an insult to the CPN. The Travellers must tread a fine line here.

Participating in the hunt may cause a clash of naval cultures. The Imperial Navy is a duty-bound, honour- and discipline-oriented military organisation with centuries of tradition behind it. The CPN is a fledgling service with loose discipline and an almost piratical flare. How this plays out is entirely up to the Travellers. They may be appalled at the seeming barbarity of CPN procedures or they may stick to their role as observers and avoid judgment. Some Travellers might even admire the way the CPN does things or wish to partake in some of the more unseemly aspects of the operation.

THE COLLACE SYSTEM

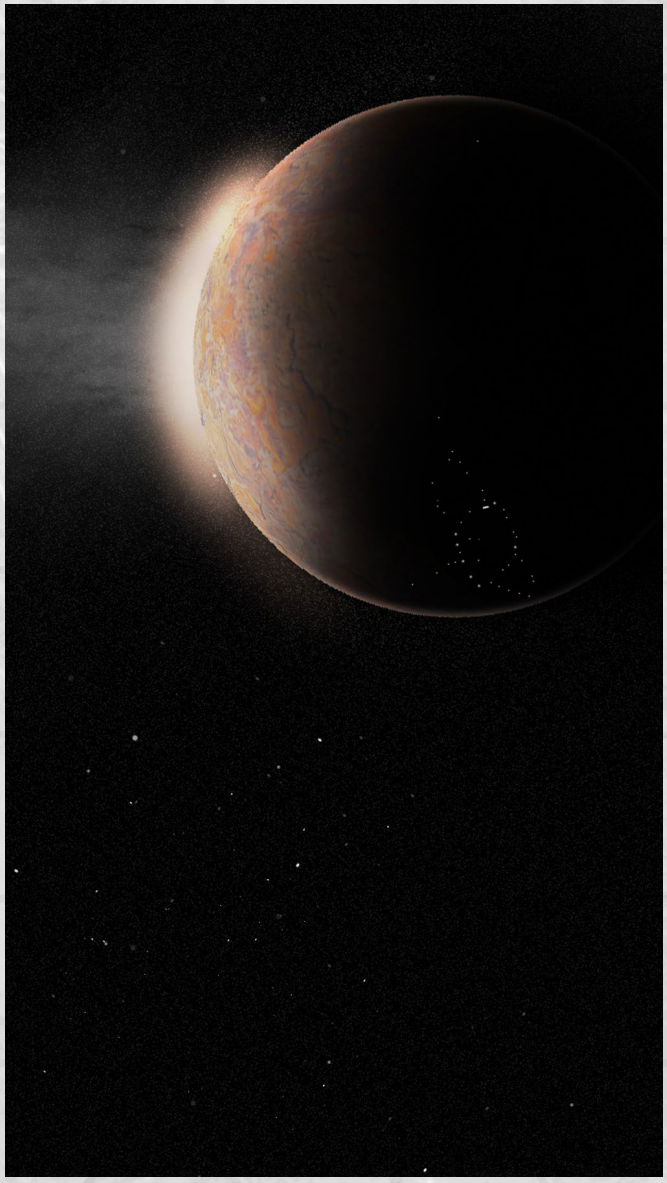
There are wide gaps between most of the worlds in the Collace system, resulting in long transit times between its planets. The nearest world from the system primary is Collace, which is at the outer edge of the habitable zone but frequently warmed by the approaches of red dwarf companion star, Sonor, whose eccentric elliptical path takes it nearly into orbit 3 during its 60-day trip around Gorie.

Kirkton, Collace's solitary moon, has a high-quality spaceport and is host to one of the system's two scout bases, the other being on Collace itself. Collace has no laws or regulations that govern wilderness refuelling at Enborne and has set up an outpost on its nearest moon to sell high-tech wares, refined fuel and provide assistance and rescue services should visiting ships suffer any problems during refuelling operations. Collace also maintains a petrochemical extraction and research base at Alcallal, a large moon whose atmosphere is a murky soup of methane and nitrogen.

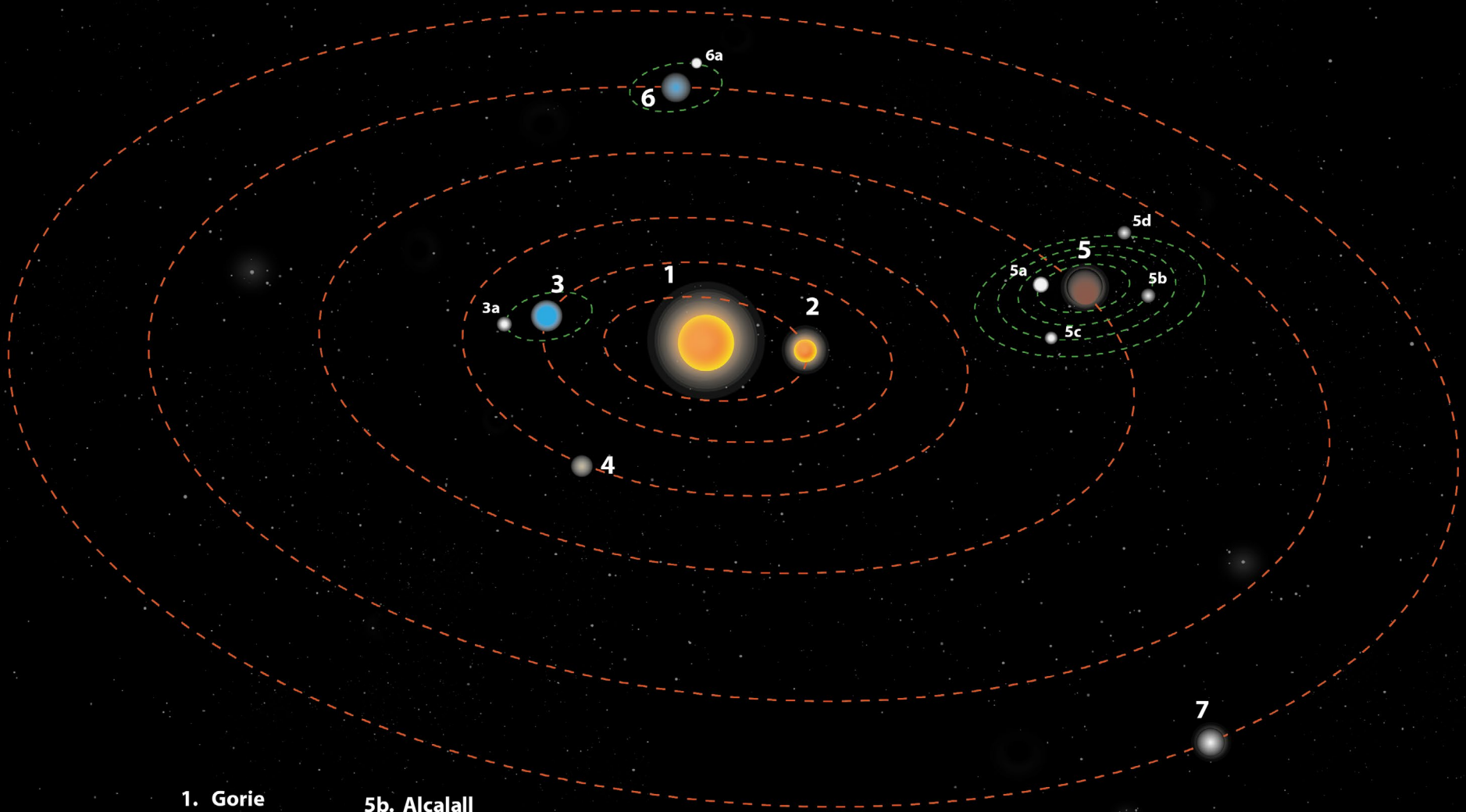
Name	Statistics	Remarks
Gorie	F1 V	Primary star.
Sonor	M3 V	Companion star.
Collace	B628843-D	High population. Industrial.
Kirkton	F200562-D	Vacuum. Scout base.
Elkhorn	X100000-0	Vacuum.
Enborne	Small Gas Giant	
Cathay	F311564-D	Ice-capped. Refuelling outpost.
Alcalall	GAA4262-C	Fluid atmosphere. Research base.
Innivar	H201315-A	Ice-capped. Vacuum. Corporate outpost.
Orkist	H200200-9	Vacuum. Commercial outpost.
Hali	X7A9000-0*	Barren.
Auros	XS00000-0	Small. Vacuum.
Scint	X211000-0	Ice-capped.

Spaceport Codes: F=high quality, G=average quality, H=primitive facility

* Hali's actual UWP is H7A9200-A. Belters, smugglers and pirates have set up a freeport on the cold, desolate outer-system world.



COLLACE SYSTEM



1. Gorie
2. Sonor
3. Collace
3a. Kirkton
4. Elkhorn
5. Enborne
5a. Cathay
5b. Alcalall
5c. Innivar
5d. Orkist
6. Hali
6a. Auros
7. Scint

Enborne

Enborne is approximately 36AU from Collace at the time of the Travellers' visit to the system and will require about a week to get there at 6g of thrust. Use the Encounters rules from the *Traveller Core Rulebook* but roll for three encounters per day instead of the standard one. This reflects the very active and intrusive presence of the CPN patrols who are avidly looking for troublemakers. Since the Travellers are in the outer zone, do not apply the Highport or High-Traffic Space DMs. Any encounter that indicates a hostile ship or pirate is swarmed upon by the CPN. However, not all of these ships are pirates. On a D6 roll, 1–3 indicates that they are pirates or corsairs; on a 4–6, they are smugglers carrying goods from Trexalon. In addition, note that because of their rather aggressive patrolling techniques, the CPN will board and investigate many innocent ships to make sure they are not pirates or smugglers, so there should be some false alarms.

During each encounter in which the Travellers board a spacecraft that the CPN inspects, they may investigate the ship. Most pirates and smugglers are carrying what one would expect; stolen goods or contraband. However, some of them have been to the heretofore unknown freeport at Hali, a world far in the outer zone of the Collace system. For each ship that is inspected, the Referee may determine randomly (rolling a 1 on 1D) or simply select certain ships that have been to, or associated with, the remote freeport. Allow the Travellers to discover this by making a Difficult Investigate (10+) check. This check may be replaced by a similar Admin or Electronics (computers) check if the Travellers inspect the ship's computer. The Effect of the check determines what they discover on the Ship Investigation table.

Ship Investigation

Effect	Result
0–2	The location of the ship for the past several weeks has been erased from the logs; however, the logs do indicate that before that, the ship was somewhere in the Collace system.
3–5	The logs were erased but the Travellers are able to recover enough data to determine that the ship has been in the Collace system consistently for the last two weeks.
6+	In addition to the above, the Travellers' investigation reveals a trace amount of neutrinos, indicating that the ship has recently used its jump drive. Their engineer may make an Average (8+) Engineer (j-drives) check to determine that the jump drive has been used within the last week.

By putting the pieces together, the Travellers and their CPN allies can determine that the ship has been in system for several weeks or possibly as long as a month and has used its jump drive to microjump. A quick look at the system map reveals that Collace has three far outer zone planets: Elkhorn, Scint and Hali, all of which are purportedly abandoned. Any such ship present at Enborne is most likely there to either pirate civilian spacecraft at the 100-diameter limit of the gas giant or transfer smuggled goods at one of Enborne's moons.

If they want to investigate further, they can either visit one or more of the outer system worlds or interrogate one of the captured pirates or smugglers, provided that Commander Vinsen does not space them all.

Regardless of their next chosen course of action, Commander Vinsen actively lobbies the Travellers to bring their capital ship for this portion of the mission segment. He also requests that they shed their role as observers and become active participants in the mission. Or as Vinsen says, '*Things are about to get sticky. We could use that big gun you rode in on*.'

INTO THE OUTER ZONE

Few visitors delve into the outer zone worlds of the Collace system. The vast tracts of empty space between Collace's barren outer worlds offer little worth exploring. However, a community of sorts has sprung up on distant Hali. Some time ago, belters discovered that Collace's Oort cloud is fairly dense with mineral and cometary bodies worth prospecting. The belters established an outpost on Hali, where they crack its ice for unrefined fuel and purportedly have used a fusion drill to penetrate the ice in order to reach mineral-rich oceans far below the surface. In recent years, the spaceport they built has become a haven for pirates and smugglers making their way along the Collace Arm.

HALI SPACEPORT

The Travellers can get to Hali one of two ways; travel at sublight speeds using their manoeuvre drives or they can microjump. Commander Vinsen will want to discuss their course of action and he is eager to include the Travellers' capital ship in the operation. The following should be considered:

- If the Travellers brought their capital ship to Enborne against the advice of Commander Vinsen, then it is present for whatever they decide to do next. If the ship is at Collace Highport, it will take just under seven days for it to get to Enborne at Thrust 6.

- If they opt to microjump with jump-capable spacecraft, the jump will take about a week.
- Should the CPN and Travellers opt to microjump to Hali, Commander Vinsen will call for an additional Gazelle and patrol corvette to assist with the next phase of the operation.
- All of the SDBs and deployment shuttles used in the operation at Enborne can be used for the operation at Hali but obviously they do not have jump drives and must travel there at sublight speeds.
- The distance to Hali is approximately 115AU (17.2 billion kilometres) and the sublight transit time at Thrust 6 is about 12 days. Note that not all CPN craft are capable of Thrust 6; patrol corvettes have only 4g of Thrust.

Whether the Travellers opt to get to Hali at sublight speed or via jump, or a combination of the two, each course of action has its implications. Travelling STL means that whoever is present at Hali will see them coming with their sensors. Microjumping to the 100-diameter limit of one of the planets provides the element of surprise. However, the majority of CPN ships are sublight. At most, the CPN will be able to contribute two Gazelles and two patrol corvettes to the operation (the pair that were present for the operation on Enborne and the pair that Commander Vinsen calls for).

Regardless of the chosen method of transportation, the arrival of the CPN and Travellers at Hali stirs up a hornet's nest of activity. If they come to Hali at sublight speeds, the community on the planet has a great deal more advanced warning and many of the pirates and smugglers will have fled; however, if the Travellers arrive at the world via microjump, they have little time to prepare and will be caught red handed.

If Commander Vinsen was successful in lobbying the Travellers to bring their capital ship, none of the ships at Hali Spaceport will be a match for them. If they did not bring the big ship and the CPN does not add additional forces to those that participated in the patrol at Enborne, the two sides could be somewhat evenly matched. Pirates and smugglers in orbit and at the spaceport will attempt to make a getaway but groups of them will turn and fight if necessary. The Referee should assign them a flotilla of 8–12 ships, chosen from High Guard, all in the sub-1,000-ton range and all armed. For more of a challenge, throw in a Fiery gunboat or corsair from Pirates of Drinax: Ships of the Reach. For most of them, the goal will be to escape without engaging in combat; however, they are outmatched in speed and manoeuvrability and many will be forced to surrender to CPN forces, especially if they are backed by an Imperial Navy capital ship. Let the prize taking begin!

The Mysterious Stranger

In addition to belters, pirates and smugglers, there is a mysterious ship present at Hali Freeport when the Travellers come calling. It is a SuSAG stealth courier (see page 46) on a secret mission to Inchin where it is to rendezvous at SuSAG 9, a remote scientific outpost, described in greater detail later in this adventure. The ship will flee the approach of the CPN and Travellers and has an excellent chance of eluding them due to its stealth features. Allow the Travellers' sensor operator to make an Average (8+) Electronics (sensors) check to detect the courier. Be sure to include the DM-6 for Superior Stealth and DM-2 for the Emissions Absorption Grid, for a net DM-8. If they fail to detect it with an Effect of 0 to –2, the Referee may optionally tell them that they detect an anomaly moving toward jump point… but cannot get a lock on it.

The belters who founded and run the spaceport will remain on the planet. Several seekers and sublight prospecting craft may be viewed from orbit with sensors. After capturing or destroying as many pirates and smugglers as possible, Commander Vinsen requests that the Travellers use the weaponry of their capital ship to destroy the spaceport or, at the very least, assault it with marines. If they choose to destroy the freeport and the capital ship is present, the Travellers should make short work of it. It has no defences that can stand up to a spinal mount or bay weapon assault. Should the Travellers opt to send in the marines, refer to Resolving Combat on page 50 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*. The belters will not put up much of a fight but pirates and smugglers left stranded at the freeport will join forces and resist being captured. Interrogating the belters confirms that the port is being used as a stopover for pirates and smugglers. It is not difficult to get the belters to talk about this and other topics. They never intended for their freeport to become a pirate haven but when pirates and smugglers started showing up with goods to trade and Credits to spend, they found it difficult to tell them no.

STRANGE VISITORS

The belters reveal that many of the recent pirates who visited the freeport were strange-looking humans from an unfamiliar minor human race. While none of the pirates that the Travellers capture are members of this race, the belters can provide holovideo images of them at the freeport. If one of the Travellers has Science (xenobiology) or a similar skill, they may be able to identify the race as the Tondouli who come from the world of Tondoul in the Five Sisters.

Whilst none of the captured pirate and smuggler ships contain any of the Tondouli, interrogated pirates inform the Travellers that the Tondouli pirates hail from a secret base. None of them knows the location of this base but they all call it 'Crossbones'.

DANGEROUS LIAISONS

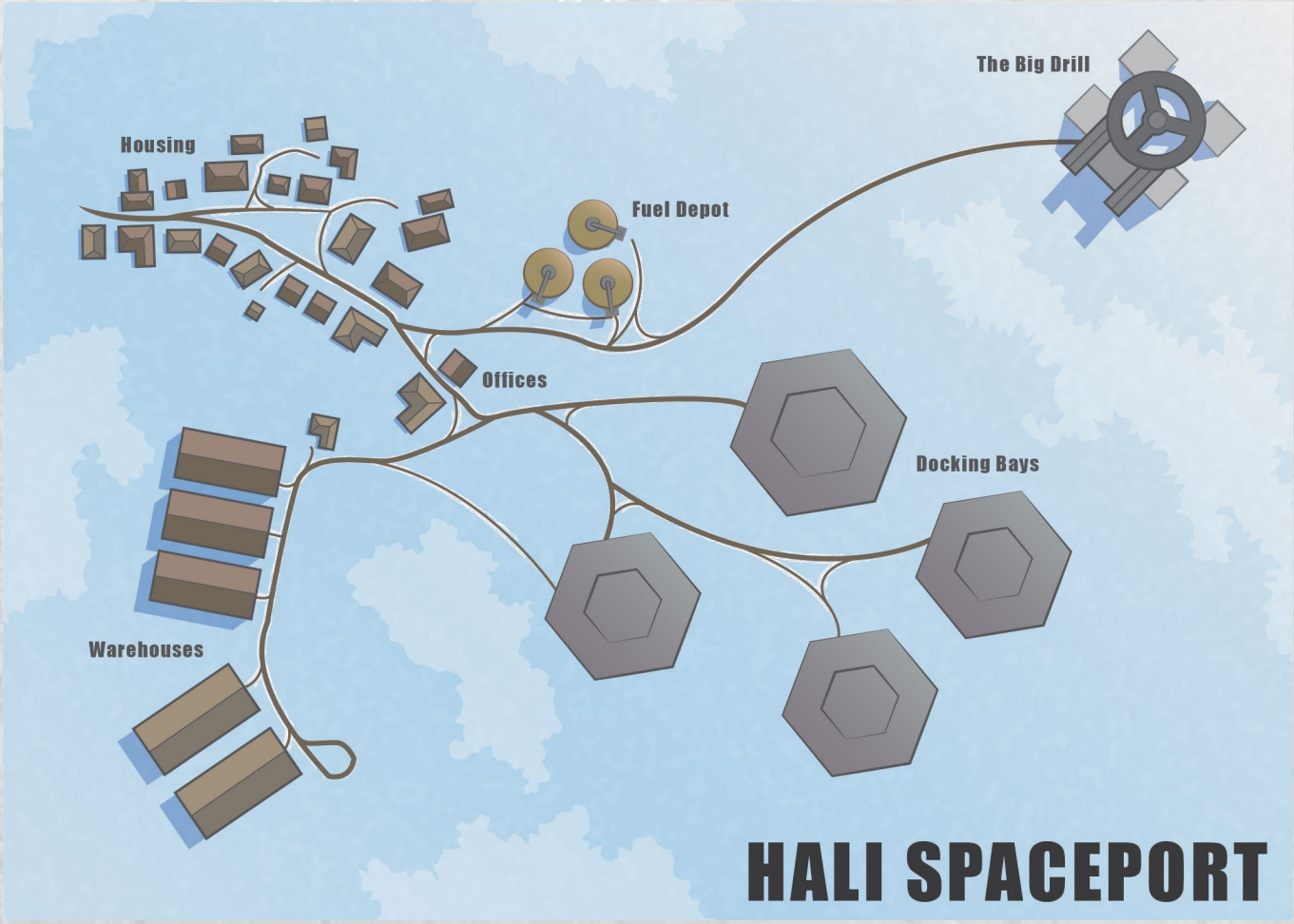
At the conclusion of the joint operation, Commander Vinsen is promoted to captain and assigned as liaison to the Travellers' ship along with a small support staff for the next Mission Segment. If they accept the liaison, then the newly minted Collacian captain joins them for the remainder of their mission. If they reject the liaison, they risk the ire of the CPN and the Collacian government but do save themselves from suffering the presence of an opinionated and aggressive personality aboard their ship. However, doing so risks creating a diplomatic incident and may jeopardise the Travellers success rating in Criterion 1 of their mission.

Regardless of whether they accept Captain Vinsen and his staff, the CPN requests that they find Crossbones and destroy it. The CPN is certain that the base is a front for Trexalonian corsairs.

While Captain Vinsen has no official powers aboard the Travellers' capital ship, he will desire access to the bridge and other facilities – in a strictly observational role, of course – and will attempt to affect policy in ways that represent the CPN's interests. Confining him to quarters or stowing him in the mess hall is not likely to sit well with him. He will petition for higher levels of access and, if side-lined, he might become a cancer among the crew, inciting a rebellious attitude among lower-ranking crewmembers and generally grousing like a petulant child. The Travellers will be pressured into giving him some level of greater access but once done, managing or restraining the captain will be a challenging task in its own right.

NEXT STEPS

Depending on their actions at Hali, the Travellers may have some clues to go on. Unless they obliterated every pirate, smuggler and belter in sight, they should know about the Tondouli and rumours of a secret pirate base called Crossbones. They should have enough information to plan where to go next to solve this mystery in order to complete Criterion 4 of their mission.



C H A P T E R - S I X

THE TANGLED WEB

District 268 has not yet been incorporated into the Imperium. Whilst many of its worlds have been rallied to the Imperial side, it remains a frontier region, a wild place where varying degrees of colonisation and control have been established. Some worlds are ready for the annexation and already host Imperial Navy bases, IISS bases and Imperial Research Stations. Others have made their own way, building independent governments and societies that are free of an Imperial presence.

There are three types of star system in District 268: Client states, neutral worlds and hostile worlds but there is some overlap between the three. After all, not every citizen on a given client state is pro-Imperial and conversely, there will be those on worlds deemed as 'hostile' who would welcome the stability and financial boon that Imperial membership provides. Therefore, the classifications provided in this section should be viewed as a guideline. Referees should keep this in mind in order to convey the rich and varied tableau of District 268.

Should the Travellers begin a new Mission Segment among one or more of the other Client States, they may generate another Intelligence Event. Use the Collace and Client States Intelligence Events table on page 22 to find out what they discover. If they turn up the same information that they obtained whilst on Collace, then so be it. Merely adjust what they find out so that it is being described by a different source.

THE CLIENT STATES

Imperial client states are systems outside the borders of the Imperium, yet which enjoy some level of Imperial sponsorship. This may be as simple as a degree of financial support with occasional visits by Imperial patrols or it might indicate a much more comprehensive presence, including naval or scout bases and colonists from the Imperium.

In District 268, the client states are of a more advanced nature since it is expected that the Imperium will eventually annex the subsector. Surveyors from the Scout Service, naval patrols and even visiting junkets of nobles, traders and corporate interests are frequent sights on these worlds.

Whilst the client states have no formal ties to one another, a de facto alliance has built up between them. The insertion of Imperial military and commercial ventures onto their worlds has inevitably created a shared status, a glue that binds them together. The Greater Collace Rift effectively divides the subsector into two sections, which makes it difficult for strong ties to exist between those in the coreward (upward) extents and those in the rimward (downward) portion.

Motmos

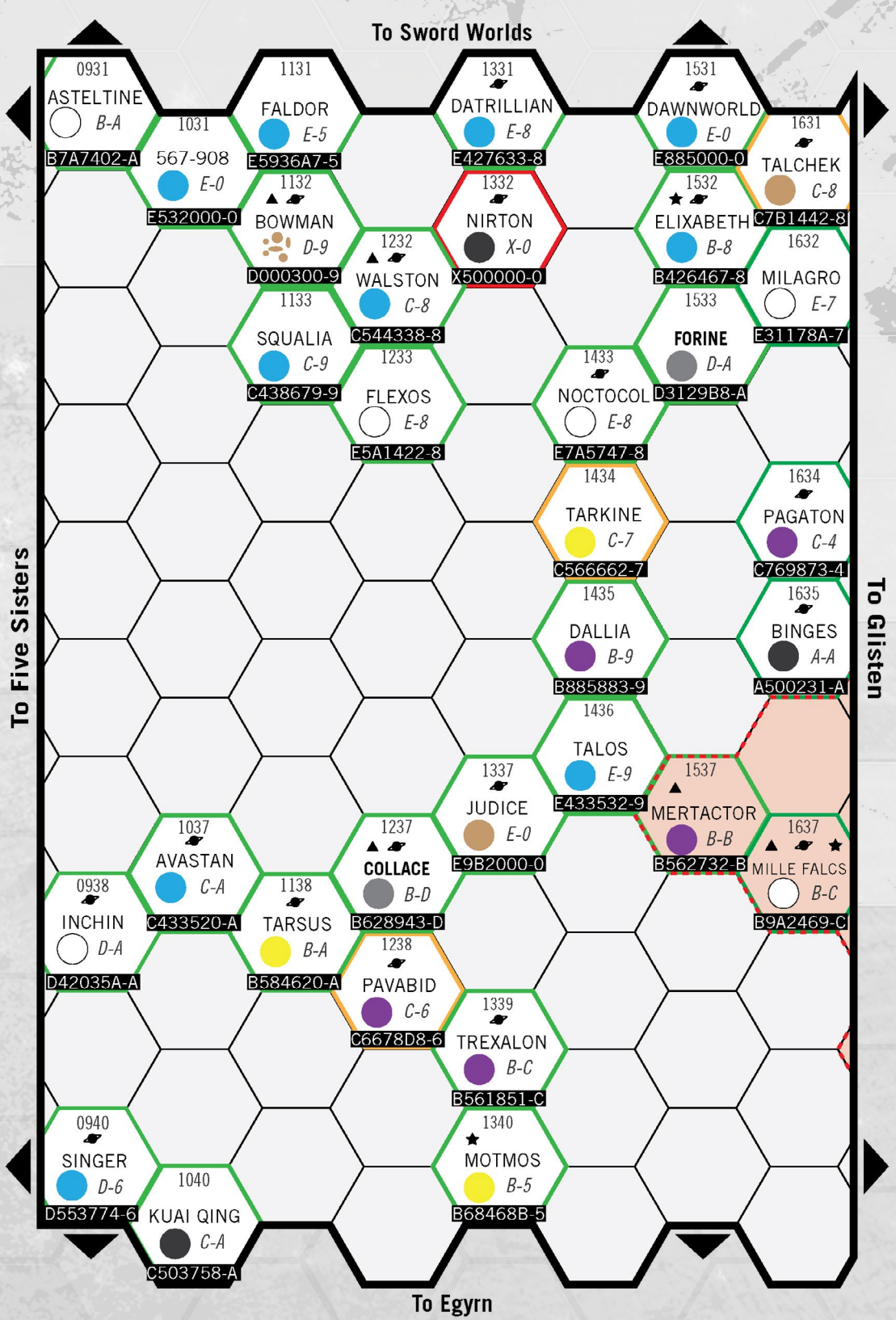
The AgWorlds Combine is headquartered at Motmos, giving it outsized importance in the subsector. A few decades ago, far-reaching Aslan ihatei came to the world and settled its outback. Afraid that it might be the harbinger of a large-scale Aslan invasion, Motmos requested assistance from the Imperium, which installed a naval base in the system. Trexalon asserts that the Aslan invasion story is vastly overblown, a fabrication by the Imperium that was devised to obtain a presence in the system in order to further isolate Trexalon.

Tarsus

Tarsus was originally settled by colonists from Fornice and eventually host to two Sword Worlder settlements as well. Tarsus is a member of the AgWorld Combine and helps to provide food for the high-population worlds of Collace and Forine. Close association with Collace and the combine prompted Tarsus' government to become an Imperial client state but its culture remains staunchly independent. SuSAG has a factory on the planet that is heavily guarded by security forces and its own small spaceport, which visitors use to circumvent Tarsus Downport.

NEUTRAL WORLDS

Many of the star systems in District 268 are not aligned with the Imperium or any other government for that matter. However, just because they do not want to fly the Sunburst flag does not necessarily mean they shun the Imperium. Many welcome traders and other visitors from the Imperium who bring information, goods and services that would otherwise be unavailable to them. Likewise, the occasional Imperial patrol does a lot to deter piracy and raiding.



DISTRICT 268

When travelling among the neutral worlds of District 268, the Imperial Navy must take care to be culturally sensitive to the systems it visits. Caution must be taken to avoid trespassing where the navy is not wanted and to make itself available where it is. The Imperial Navy is aware that although many of the neutral worlds are not currently client states, they may very well be incorporated with all or most of the subsector at some future date. It is important to think to the future when interacting with people from these worlds.

Intelligence Events gleaned on the neutral worlds have a different flavour from those of the client states. Information among these worlds travels more freely in some ways but is limited in others. Unusual intelligence can be obtained here because Travellers to these worlds feel less inhibited by the overwhelming presence of the Imperium. On the other hand, rumours and intelligence gleaned on neutral worlds is more often spurious. Travellers must be careful to separate the wheat from the chaff when it comes to collecting intelligence from these parts. They should also learn to follow up on any intelligence that seems even mildly worthwhile. Truth can be stranger than fiction on the frontier and odd or unusual intelligence should not be dismissed out of hand.

Neutral Worlds Intelligence Events

2D	Intelligence
2-3	Binges has become the primary purveyor of jump-capable ships in the subsector and does not discriminate when it comes to customers. They have recently refurbished jump drives for several starships out of the Five Sisters.
46	The SuSAG plant on Tarsus has its own spaceport. Ships that use the facility rarely file flight plans before heading to parts unknown.
7–8	Avastan has become a functional anarchy which allegedly allows a computer to make most of its policy decisions.
9–10	The Inchin colony nearly collapsed but seems to have stabilised recently.
11–12	There seems to be trouble brewing in the Five Sisters. The flow of trade from the subsector has dwindled but refugees have been seen in increasing numbers.

Avastan

Avastan is the site of a Collacian colony that was established to facilitate the passage of ships into the Five Sisters. The colony was eventually disavowed by Collace and is in a state of economic ruin. The worlds of the system and its planetoid belts have poor mineral resources and conditions on the mainworld are difficult. Its one saving grace is the presence of four gas giants which make wilderness refuelling easy for starships that are passing althrough, but this does little to help its beleaguered population.

Binges

Making a big killing in business usually means getting there first. Colonists from Glisten came to the Binges system in the early 800s to create the subsector's first Class A shipyard. When a gold rush of colonists failed to materialise, the shipyard fell on hard times and eventually went bankrupt. It has been propped up by a conglomerate of small banks and shell companies. Binges now builds starships and jump drives for any and all comers, some of them rather shady.

Inchin

Another struggling Collacian colony, Inchin is one step away from the neighbouring Five Sisters, which makes it a convenient stopover for ships making their way through the Mewey Empire and into District 268. The colony has nearly collapsed multiple times but has recently begun to thrive after belters discovered moderately valuable resources in its outer belt. See Inchin on page 35 for more details.

HOSTILE WORLDS

There are two worlds in the subsector that are outwardly hostile to Imperial encroachment. These are Pavabid and Trexalon. Pavabid is an isolationist religious dictatorship with little desire to participate in the larger interstellar community. Its people are ruled by the Thearchs of the Pavabidian Heresy, an offshoot of the Church of the Stellar Divinity that believes that only its star is a beneficent god and that all others are evil. Only the Thearchs themselves ever travel but even that is rare. They spend most of their time living on the plush grounds of a gravitic temple that floats over the land masses of the planet bringing the word of their star (and god) to the people. Pavabid would be completely isolated if not for the fact that it contains rich reserves of iridium, platinum and rare earth elements. The Thearchs are reluctant to let anyone exploit their resources but Trexalon has made inroads with them by building and maintaining a highly secure satellite network for the church.

Trexalon has a highly motivated culture and successful high-tech industry. The Collace embargo on its goods and Imperial presence in the subsector have stifled its economic growth. The Trexalon Technical Consortium (TTC) has had to navigate a challenging environment but has been remarkably resilient, defying the embargo and reaching out to the neutral worlds of the subsector. Travelling to Trexalon in brazen fashion might be ill-advised for an Imperial Navy capital ship but should the Travellers find a way to reach out to members of the TTC, they might obtain valuable intel, which could help them cut to the chase in their mission to find the pirate base.

Hostile Worlds Intelligence Events

2D	Intelligence
2–3	The Pavabid system has suffered dozens of pirate attacks and raids over the last 180 days.
4–5	The TTC has been arming more of their starships to address the growing piracy problem in the region but has not raided Collacian or Imperial shipping. They do not believe that the attacks are from Collacian ships.
6–7	Whilst there are no Pavabidian missionaries to evangelise their religion, the church does send members of the thearchy to publicly condemn the 'heathen' branches of the Church of the Stellar Divinity.
8–10	The Imperial Navy base on Motmos was set up in response to alleged Aslan ihatei incursions. TTC agents are sowing doubt among the Motmosians, floating the theory that seizure of planetary assets was a power grab by the Imperium.
11–12	The Collace monopoly of many markets has resulted in price gouging. Many neutral worlds have turned to Trexalon as an alternative in spite of the Collace embargo on Trexalonian goods.

THE RED HERRING

If the Travellers accepted Captain Vinsen and his officers aboard their ship for this Mission Segment, they express opinions about the growing pool of intelligence being collected. Despite growing evidence over the course of the cruise that Trexalon is not behind the piracy problem, the CPN officers remain insistent that they are. In fact, they will go through frighteningly elaborate mental gymnastics to assure the Travellers that any and all clues discovered point to a Trexalonian conspiracy.

Some of the CPN officers are more direct than others. Whilst some virtually froth at the mouth with a desire to point the finger at Trexalon, there is a clique with a more nuanced approach. This group is led by Captain Vinsen himself. Among Vinsen's responses are the following.

- *'Of course the clues point elsewhere. The TTC fears the Imperium. They're a clever lot. Any plan they have is going to include a significant amount of misdirection.'*
- *'The TTC are known collaborators with the Zhodani. Their agents have infiltrated many systems in the subsector, some of them on client state worlds.'*
- *The reason the Plankwell Project has not gone through is that Trexalon have discovered how easy it is – forgive my candour – to put a wedge between Collace and the Imperium.*'

The Travellers should be challenged at every step of the adventure to question what they are seeing. It may become especially difficult to sift the wheat from the chaff with the distracting presence of their very patriotic Collacian allies.

C H A P T E R - S E V E N

INCHIN

Life as a colonist is tough. Taming alien worlds far from civilised space requires excellent planning, high-quality equipment, good supplies and more than a little gumption. Even then, most colonies fail. Despite several calamities that should have caused its complete collapse, the colony at Inchin has somehow managed to survive.

Its primary star, Erwon, is orbited by two immense solar power collectors, each of which absorbs and redistributes its energy via an array of lasers. Each of the collectors has enough distributors to deliver energy to dozens of endpoints in the Inchin system but currently the collectors are only providing power to two facilities; the downport on Inchin and a mysterious space station in the Outer Belt.

Name	Statistics	Remarks
Erwon	F0 V	Primary star.
(Empty)*	—	—
Sillibyn	Large Gas Giant	—
Sil-0	X400000-0	Vacuum.
Sil-1	X300000-0	Vacuum.
Sil-2	X200000-0	Vacuum.
Sil-4	X400000-0	Vacuum.
Hodi	X100000-0	Vacuum.
Inner Belt	H000269-9	Planetoid Belt.
Hastings	Small Gas Giant	—
Ardour	XS00000-0	Small. Vacuum.
Sentil	X200000-0	Vacuum.
Inchin	D42035A-A	De Lo Po
The Crone	X201000-0	Ice-capped. Vacuum.
Yyndymia	Large Gas Giant	—
(Ring System)	Y000000-0	—
Yyn-0	X200000-0	Vacuum.
Brodie	G30016A-9	Vacuum. Mining outpost.
Yyn-2	XS00000-0	Small world.
Yyn-3	X301000-0	Ice-capped. Vacuum.
Yyn-4	X200000-0	Vacuum.
Outer Belt	G000200-8	Planetoid Belt

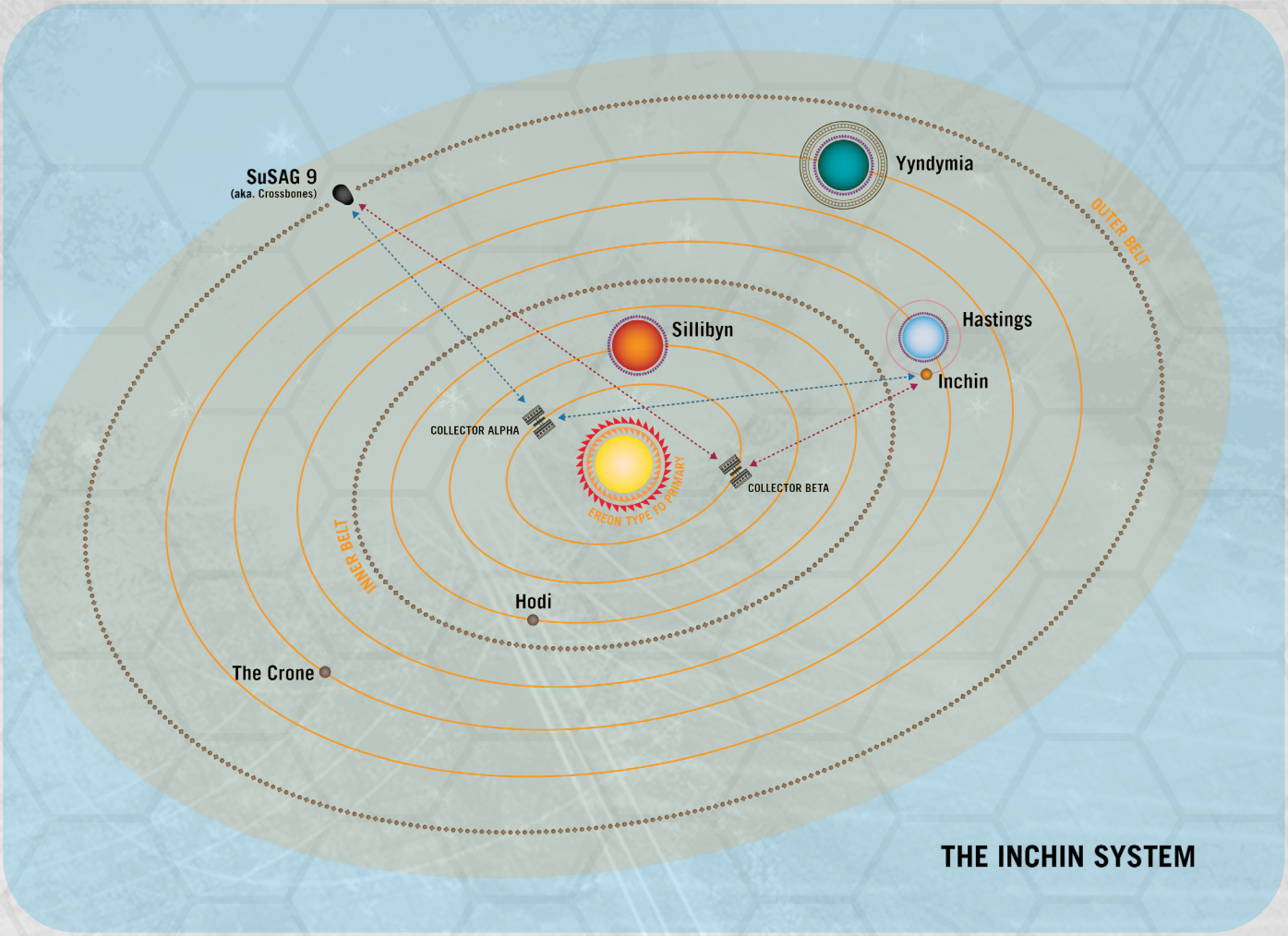
Spaceport Codes: G=average quality, H=primitive facility
*Orbit 1 is empty of planetary bodies but two stellar collectors are present there.

The Inchin system was overlooked by prospective settlers for centuries. Whilst its two outer gas giants, Hastings and Yyndymia, are useful for wilderness refuelling, early surveys revealed few appealing qualities in the system. Each of the outer gas giants has a number of moons, mostly airless rockballs and most of which have yet to be properly surveyed. Yyndymia is host to an extensive and colourful ring system that is by far the most aesthetically appealing feature in the entire star system. The inner gas giant, Sillibyn, is a massive and highly radioactive 'hot Jupiter' with few moons. Its moons are close to the planet, well within its dangerous magnetosphere. Only a spacecraft with radiation shielding should even consider approaching.

Hodi and The Crone are small rockball worlds with poor resources. Inchin, the outermost moon of Hastings, has virtually no magnetic field to speak of and only a very thin – bordering on trace – atmosphere that is tainted by methane from unknown sources. Early field research indicated that it might come from deep fissures in its desolate surface. Inchin has a few man-made satellites for communication and navigation purposes and two energy-routing satellites perched in Lagrange points.

Inchin's two planetoid belts are simply referred to as the Inner Belt and Outer Belt. Both are dense with planetoids but early forays by prospectors revealed little other than ice (in the Outer Belt only) and carbonaceous bodies. The Inner Belt is one orbit inside the system's habitable zone and the Outer Belt is some 16.4 AU away, far into the outer zone.

The remoteness and lack of habitability made the Inchin system attractive to SuSAG, which secretly established a large research and development facility in a hollowed-out planetoid of the Outer Belt in the early 900s, decades before District 268 was opened up by the Imperium. The facility was named SuSAG 9 and its initial purpose was to create psionic drugs and anagathics.



THE INCHIN SYSTEM

Inchin and Avastan were colonised half a century ago by Collace in an attempt to establish a bulwark against expansion by Trexalon. The plan was to seed the worlds with Collacian colonists to prevent Trexalon from doing the same. However, Collace soon abandoned the colonies to their own devices, squandering any sense of enduring loyalty that they might have had. To add insult to injury, the Inchin colony was given faulty fusion power plants and fuel purifiers that quickly began to suffer from degraded performance and frequent failures.

With little to no help from anyone else and no water to speak of on the surface of Inchin, the colonists began to explore the belts for large ice chunks. Their faulty purifiers could only handle a certain level of impurity, so they sought out the cleanest, easiest-to-process ice they could find. During their exhaustive search, they were shocked to discover SuSAG 9, a fully functional space station on the remote periphery of the star system.

The scientific and security teams from SuSAG 9 grudgingly met with the belters, making sure to prevent them from discovering the true nature of the facility. Despite the risk, its chief scientist, Dr. Uani Dolchiss, instructed her technicians to assist the colonists. SuSAG 9 had been disavowed by its parent corporation some time ago and had built a stellar energy array to serve as a backup source of energy. Dr. Dolchiss' technicians built additional power distributors for the colony, effectively giving them free and limitless energy. This gift was made on condition that their knowledge of SuSAG 9 remain of the utmost secrecy, effectively giving the Inchinese colonists grade-B SuSAG security clearances. Whilst secrets have a way of being leaked over time, to date the Inchin colony have held up their end of the bargain.

The Ballad of Jhan and Uani

The history of SuSAG 9 is long and fraught with ups and downs. When construction on the facility was completed in 912, it was one of many extraterritorial SuSAG research sites. The company has always operated under great secrecy. Even its sites within Imperial space are highly protected and kept under a layered security apparatus. Sites outside Imperial space are usually used to produce illegal products. SuSAG 9 was originally designed to produce psionic drugs and experimental anagathics with the latter being its primary focus.

In the mid-900s, the station security chief was Jhan Okenedee, from Tondoul in the neighbouring Five Sisters. The Tondouli are a minor human race, one of the dozens with which the Ancients seeded Charted Space. Jhan was the rare Tondouli to escape his homeworld and make his way to Imperial space where he served a distinguished career in the Imperial Army before going into the employ of SuSAG Security. Jhan worked his way up the ranks and eventually took the top spot at SuSAG 9, at the time considered a very important holding of the megacorporation.

Jhan and Dr. Uani Dolchiss became good friends over their decades of working together. As the years went by, Jhan noticed that Uani, an avid user of custom anagathics, did not age. Rumour has it the two became lovers and that Uani began to administer anagathics to him. In the process, she discovered that Jhan's immune system had certain flaws she could not fix and that while she could prolong his life by a few decades, her good friend would eventually die.

Solving the mystery of Jhan's mortality blossomed into a fascination with minor human race physiology. After obtaining samples from over a dozen human subspecies, Uani theorised that many of the Ancients' creations were highly imperfect, perhaps by design. She sought to create cures for the Tondouli, with the goal of helping other flawed minor human races as well. Uani expertly covered up her unauthorised research for a long time. Years passed before SuSAG figured out what was going on but when they did, there was a falling out that nearly resulted in the removal of Dr. Dolchiss.

When Jhan died in 1012, a century after the establishment of the laboratory, Uani fell into extreme depression. When she came out of it, she renewed her efforts to create cures for the maladies suffered by various human subspecies. She managed to negotiate a buyout of SuSAG 9 and made the site into a spinoff of its parent corporation. Whilst Uani was free to pursue independent research, SuSAG 9 could no longer rely on the consistent support of SuSAG. The megacorporation continues to send teams to the site from time-to-time to purchase valuable data but Dr. Dolchiss has largely been left to her own devices.

In the following years, she reached out to the Tondouli for more test subjects. Many have become members of her security team. With the success of her gene treatments, she has earned their loyalty but with few resources at her disposal, she cannot pay them much for their services. Over the course of the past decade, Tondoul has fallen on hard times. The world had essentially become a vassal to the Mewey Empire, which recently suffered a coup and has turned to authoritarianism. Refugees from Tondoul have fled their homeworld, many to Inchin. Uani has arranged for the acquisition of low-grade starships for their use. With little to trade and few prospects, most turned to smuggling as their primary vocation. Tondouli smugglers have worked for both Trexalon and Collace, making profits from the embargos that each world has placed on the other.

Things have recently become more desperate. SuSAG has little use for the drugs Uani is developing and is disappointed with the station's reduced output of more useful products and data. They have virtually cut SuSAG 9 off from the one source of profits that it had. The reduced flow of Credits has made the Tondouli smugglers desperate and many have turned to piracy. The situation has gotten out of hand but Uani is close to making a major breakthrough, one which could mean not only the salvation of the Tondouli but might also lead to discoveries that could help other suffering minor human races.

INCHIN HIGHPORT AND DOWNPORT

Inchin has rudimentary starports both in orbit and on the surface of the planet. The highport sees very little traffic and has only two docking bays, both of which can serve spacecraft of up to 400 tons. The highport has six auxiliary umbilicals that can be used to dock additional ships but these are rarely used. The initial layout of the highport was intended to serve only the colonists, whose primary goal was to get to the surface of Inchin to make their home. With increased belter traffic, a need has developed for additional accommodations and recreation facilities that have been added in a somewhat slapdash manner. As a result, the highport has a clunky, asymmetrical look to it with the added sections a bit like blocky growths on the hull of the original structure. For all that it lacks in aesthetics, at least a belter can get a decent room, a nice meal and a stiff drink there now. Refuelling and starship service facilities are spartan and cannot handle more than two ships at a time but they qualify the highport as a solid Class D facility.

Inchin Down is what a Traveller might expect on the frontier; rugged, utilitarian and little in the way of charm. There is not much of a startown to speak of; Inchin has until recently received so little traffic that it would have been a waste of resources to build extravagant facilities for visitors who were unlikely to ever appear. The town surrounding the downport includes residential tenements, light industrial facilities and commercial stores. There is a small bazaar adjacent to the starport for merchants to sell their wares on the rare occasions that one stops through the system. A few hostels, restaurants and bars are present to serve the few visitors who have need of such facilities.

Gravity is light on Inchin at only 0.35g so Travellers will walk with a light step on its surface. Residential and commercial clusters are often segmented or domed and sealed walkways are present between many structures, alleviating the need to go outside. The haphazard

way the town was built has caused some sprawl and Travellers might, from time-to-time find that they need to exit an airlock and step out into the harsh light of the virtually airless planet. Combination masks and full body covering are required in order to survive the planet's very thin atmosphere and radiation from the system's bright whitish-yellow star.

THE POWER PLANT

Power at both the highport and downport is ostensibly provided by fusion reactors but both are unreliable and experience frequent failures. The faulty power plants should have been replaced decades ago but Inchin's impoverished colonists did not have the means to do so; the colony should have simply collapsed, yet somehow it has survived; some might say it has even begun to thrive.

Should the Travellers land at the downport, they may notice that the fusion plant operates only intermittently. Its frequent failures should result in a downport-wide alarm that is followed by an outage, yet power never seems to be disrupted at Inchin Down. Oddly enough, no one seems to be particularly upset by these events. If asked, starport technicians and other personnel inform the Travellers not to worry; they have a backup power plant. In fact, the fusion power plant has become the backup system and its primary is now the stellar array built by SuSAG 9. The downport has an array of batteries that retain the energy gathered from the collectors. The battery facility is located on the outskirts of the downport in a small valley that is near a dormant methane-emitting fissure. Power is routed to the downport via subterranean cables, which have been carefully concealed. It appears that the locals want to keep their primary power source a secret.

THE STELLAR ENERGY ARRAY

With unreliable access to replacement parts and maintenance services for its fusion power plant, scientists at SuSAG 9 determined that it was in their best interests to develop a backup power system. They built two large solar energy collectors, dubbed Collector Alpha and Collector Beta, placing them in the L4 and L5 Lagrange Points of Erwon and Sillibyn. The collectors transmit energy via laser photons to both SuSAG 9 and the power plant on Inchin and are detectable throughout the Inchin system when they are in operation.

The transmission distance to SuSAG 9 is 19 AU (approximately 2.84 billion kilometres). At SuSAG 9, the system uses an exhaust system to mask what would otherwise be a rather large heat signature. SuSAG 9 can shut down the flow via encrypted communication if necessary but this requires approximately 2.63 hours for the instruction to be carried over the distance between the station and its collectors.

The Travellers can detect the energy signatures of the collectors when they are active. The array operators are careful to only operate them intermittently and without a predictable interval. The Travellers should be given the chance to detect the energy surge by making a Difficult (10+) Electronics (sensors) check. Determine the Effect of the check and consult the Energy Signature Detection table for the results.

Energy Signature Detection

Effect	Result
–3 to –1	Although they fail to get accurate information, the energy signature of the collectors is so great that the Travellers still detect something happening in the orbit of Erwon. The Travellers must approach at least one orbit closer for another attempt.
0	A large and persistent energy burst is picked up by the Travellers' spectrometer (one of their many sensors) between Erwon and Sillibyn.
1–3	As above but there are in fact two energy bursts and both appear to be directing energy to locations elsewhere in the system.
4–5	As above but the sensor operator sees that both are directing energy towards Inchin and… somewhere else. Allow the Travellers to approach at least one orbit closer to make an attempt to discover where the second beam of photons is being directed.
6+	As above but the sensor operator determines that two devices located between the system's star and first orbit are directing energy to Inchin and somewhere in the outer zone of the system. A closer look will allow them to establish the telemetry between the collectors and SuSAG 9.

Regardless of the results, the Travellers must travel to the stellar energy collectors to accurately determine where the laser photons are being directed to in the outer zone. Should they opt to do so, they may approach within Distant range to make another attempt. A successful Difficult (10+) Electronics (sensors) check gives them reasonably accurate coordinates to the destination of the energy in the Outer Belt. The bandwidth of laser emissions is very low and they are easy to detect once the Travellers get in range.

Keep in mind that the collectors only operate about 25 percent of the time on any given day, so the Travellers might lose track of them until they get closer, only to find them again once operation is resumed.

Approaching the Energy Collectors

Concerns that visiting starships might discover the collectors were taken into consideration during their design. For that reason, both were equipped with separate lenses for self-defence. If the Travellers approach the collectors within Distant range, they are targeted by the collectors, both of which are operating with Virtual Gunner/1 software. The lenses are effectively very-high-powered beam lasers. The collectors were never truly meant to be used as weapons and incur DM-1 when targeting objects at Very Long and DM-2 at Distant ranges; however, they do have a scatter effect which may hit any objects within Close range of the primary target. Make separate Gunner checks for these targets and inflict half damage on any that are hit.

Weapon	TL	Range	Power	Damage	Traits
Collector Laser	12	Distant	Special*	1DD	–

*The collector laser is powered by dielectric mirrors that draw energy directly from Erwon, the primary star of the Inchin system.

If the Travellers approach within Distant range on a vector to intercept the stellar collectors, they target the Travellers in the first round and send an automated warning that they must change course to avoid being attacked. If the warning is ignored and they continue to approach, the lasers fire at the Travellers' ship during the second round. Because of the ranges involved, this encounter is not likely to result in a hit. Allow the Travellers to estimate the abilities of the lasers by making a Difficult (10+) Gunner (any) or Engineer (power) check. Should the collector lasers manage to hit the Travellers' ship, they are likely to do a considerable amount of damage.

The Travellers may choose to fire back at the collectors. Whilst the collectors are large objects, they are essentially flimsy, light-frame spacecraft and will not stand up to a concerted attack by a capital ship. Assign each of them 280 Hull Points with no armour. The collectors cease to function after incurring damage equal to half (140) of their Hull Points. Depending on what the Travellers have discovered so far, they might know that the Inchin colony is depending on the collectors as their primary source of energy. If so, they know that destroying the collectors will have adverse effects on the colony.

CROSSBONES

The fabled pirate base has been found at last and it is… a research station? The Travellers will make their way out to the Outer Belt to find that the base is not a menacing pirate haven at all but a remote scientific outpost. However, Crossbones does indeed live up to its name as it has become a haven for pirates.

Much as when they arrived at Hali Freeport, the Travellers' arrival at the site stirs up a great deal of activity. The station contains a small spaceport that launches several starships to confront the Travellers. This makeshift flotilla includes the following starships:

- Three armed far traders, both with a pair of double pulse laser turrets.
- One armed subsidised merchant with four double turrets, two with pulse lasers, one with sandcasters and the other with a pair of missile racks.
- A seeker armed with a double turret containing two beam lasers.

Several of the ships are identified as those which escaped the assault on Hali. It is an underwhelming force but backed by the station's weaponry as well. The approaching ships make an aggressive approach regardless of the seeming futility.

The Travellers have reached the ultimate goal of their mission, the pirate base. As a warfighting ship of the Imperial Navy, they are within their rights to destroy it… but should they? Captain Vinsen certainly thinks so and – if given access to the bridge – vocally and emphatically demands that they blow up the station without further hesitation.

There are many ways the Travellers can handle this situation. They can use the weapons at their disposal to obliterate the base outright or can decimate its defences, leave the station intact and board it, taking

the pirates and their benefactors prisoner. If they opt for this approach, refer to Resolving Combat on page 50 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*. The pirates, station security and its other residents will put up a fight but will not be able to withstand a boarding action by Imperial Marines.

Alternatively, they may avoid combat altogether, reach out to the station and communicate with Dr. Dolchiss to find out more and what they might do to resolve things peacefully. The fact is people rarely turn to piracy unless it is a last resort. There may be underlying solutions to the problem that can be arrived at without firing a single shot. The Travellers have the upper hand here and may clearly dictate terms in whatever manner they see fit.

One wildcard in this scenario is the presence of the SuSAG stealth courier, which is docked at SuSAG 9 at the time of the Travellers' arrival. In addition to its crew, the courier is staffed by members of the Extra-Imperial Research Arm. Although SuSAG has largely disavowed the station and cut off its funding, they have come to SuSAG 9 to purchase research data from Dr. Dolchiss. The staff and crew on the courier will seek to get away as quickly and quietly as they can, without the notice or interference of the Travellers if they can avoid it. If the Travellers can find a way to interact with the ship and its crew, it could change the nature of this adventure.

Grandfather's Children

The stories of the Ancients and the many species they created is well known among Travellers. The Vilani, Zhodani, Vargr and Geonee were uplifted from Terran stock and independently developed jump drive, enabling them to reach out to the stars. In addition, dozens of minor human subspecies were created, some with less than stellar track records. Among these were the humans of Tondoul.

The Tondouli, while adapted to survive on low-gravity worlds with very thin atmospheres, were kept alive for thousands of years by maintaining the slowly failing machinery that the Ancients had left behind. Unlike most other minor human races, the Tondouli were never fully adapted to their environment and suffer from a high rate of congenital disorder.

Making matters worse, stellar flares from Tondoul's red dwarf companion star burned off much of the planet's atmosphere and water over a millennium ago, resulting in the deaths of millions. If not for the timely arrival and intervention of the Scout Service in 260, they would likely have gone extinct. Whilst the scouts returned from time-to-time, bringing much-needed replacement parts and technology, their visits became less frequent as the Imperium began to focus its efforts elsewhere. The Tondouli were left to their own devices.

They eventually allied with the Mewey Empire, a small interstellar state based on Mewey, whose inhabitants are a minor humanoid race native to the planet. Mewey is also host to a very old, far-flung Aslan ihatei population who live an isolated existence on a remote island chain. The Mewey traded with the Aslan for technology, including a small number of starships, which they used to colonise the neighbouring world of Ochecate and make contact with Tondoul.

The Tondouli are highly dependent on Mewey for the resources and replacement parts they use to keep their life support machinery functional. Unfortunately for the Tondouli, the Mewey were infected by a highly adaptable disease on Ochecate, which they spread to Mewey and Tondoul. The disease has affected the Mewey and Aslan but it seems to affect the already afflicted Tondouli the worst.

C H A P T E R - E I G H T

RETURN TO MILLE FALCS

The Travellers arrival on Mille Falcs is far different than their first visit to the system. Whilst the naval base retains its frontier air, it is obvious that something is afoot. As they approach the system mainworld, the chief electronics officer informs the captain that a decorated squadron from the 100th Fleet is present at the highport naval station. It might come as a surprise to the Travellers that their arrival in port is not heralded with the same pomp and circumstance that they experienced on their departure.

After docking, the Travellers' officer corps are briskly whisked away for their debriefing. The Referee should keep in mind the myriad factions that have sprung up regarding the annexation of District 268. Some are clearly in favour of it whilst others are reluctant to have the Imperium dive into a possible quagmire. In addition to providing the details described in Criteria 1 and 5, the Travellers are likely to be asked a number of questions. Refer to Determining Mission Success on page 38 of the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook* and evaluate the Travellers' performance as described. As in all missions, the Travellers can expect to be asked three tough questions about their mission. These may include – but are not limited to – the following.

- Did you address the piracy issue in the best way possible?
- Have you improved our relationship with Collace?
- Is District 268 ready for annexation?
- What have you done to make things better in the subsector?

There are multiple ways that a group of Travellers may have handled this mission. No way is necessarily right or wrong but regardless of the path the Travellers have chosen, they must be prepared to defend and justify their actions with conviction for the Admiralty to accept the outcome. After all, it is not their job to coddle or assuage the fears or concerns of their officer corps. There are jobs to be done and missions to complete. If the Travellers have completed all of their mission criteria and can explain their approach and why their actions were in the interests of the Imperial Navy and the Imperium itself, then they can expect a reasonably good outcome.

CHARACTERS AND OPPOSITION

Captain Elmore Vinsen

SPECIES			GENDER	AGE
Human			Male	34
TRAITS			–	
STR	7	INT	8	SKILLS
DEX	10	EDU	8	Admin 1, Carouse 2, Gambler 1, Gun Combat (energy) 1, Leadership 2, Melee (blade) 2, Pilot (small craft) 3, Tactics (naval) 2
END	7	SOC	10	
PSI	–			
WEAPONS			Gauss pistol (3D), Cutlass (3D+1)	
ARMOUR			Shipboard Working Dress (+1), Cloth Armour Outer Weave (+4)	

Known Background:

Brazen and ambitious, Captain Vinsen sees the CPN as the sentinel of District 268. The ends justify the means as far as he is concerned. If a few star systems have to be sacrificed so Collace can establish hegemony over the subsector then so be it. Empires were not built by accountants and bureaucrats. They were built by women and men of conviction and valour. Captain Vinsen is a rising star in the CPN and is secretly a member of the Plankwell Project inner circle. He seeks to manipulate the Imperial Navy into doing his bidding.

Dr. Uani Dolchiss

SPECIES	GENDER	AGE
Human	Female	362

TRAITS	–

STR	4	INT	12	SKILLS
DEX	7	EDU	14	Admin 3, Advocate 1, Electronics (computers) 2, Engineer (life support) 2, Engineer (power) 2, Language (Tondouli) 3, Leadership 2, Persuade 3, Science (chemistry) 4, Science (genetics) 4, Science (xenobiology) 4
END	5	SOC	5	
PSI	–			

Known Background:

More than anything else, Dr. Dolchiss cares about finding a cure for the ills of the Tondouli. She is a scientist and has clearly gotten in over her head by allowing a pirate community to develop at SuSAG 9. She wants to find a way out of the mess she is in but does not want to lose the station where she has spent centuries of her adult life; she is on the cusp of a great breakthrough and is terrified that events have spiralled out of control and that she might not be able to help the Tondouli people after dedicating her life to their cause

SUSAG STEALTH COURIER

TL12		TONS	COST (MCr)
Hull	100 tons, Streamlined	–	6
	Emissions Absorption Grid	2	4
	Superior Stealth	–	100
Armour	Crystaliron, Armour: 4	5	1.2
M-Drive	Thrust 2, Energy Efficient	2	4.4
J-Drive	Jump 2, Energy Efficient	10	16.5
Power Plant	Fusion (TL12), Power 45	3	3
Fuel Tanks	J-2, 12 weeks of operation	23	–
Bridge		10	0.75
Computer	Computer/10	–	0.16
Sensors	Military	2	4.1
Weapons	Double Turret (sandcaster, energy efficient pulse laser)	1	2
Systems	Fuel Processor (40 tons/day)	2	0.1
	Fuel Scoops		
	Collapsible Fuel Tank (10 tons)	0.1	0.01
	Laboratory	4	1
	Docking Space (4 tons)	5	1.25
	Air/Raft	-	0.25
Staterooms	Standard x4	16	2
Software	Manoeuvre/0	–	–
	Jump Control/2	–	0.2
	Library	–	–
Cargo		14.9	–

TOTAL: MCr 146.92

CREW

PILOT/ASTROGATOR, ENGINEER, GUNNER, LABORATORY SCIENTIST

RUNNING COSTS

MAINTENANCE COST
Cr12243/month

• • • • •

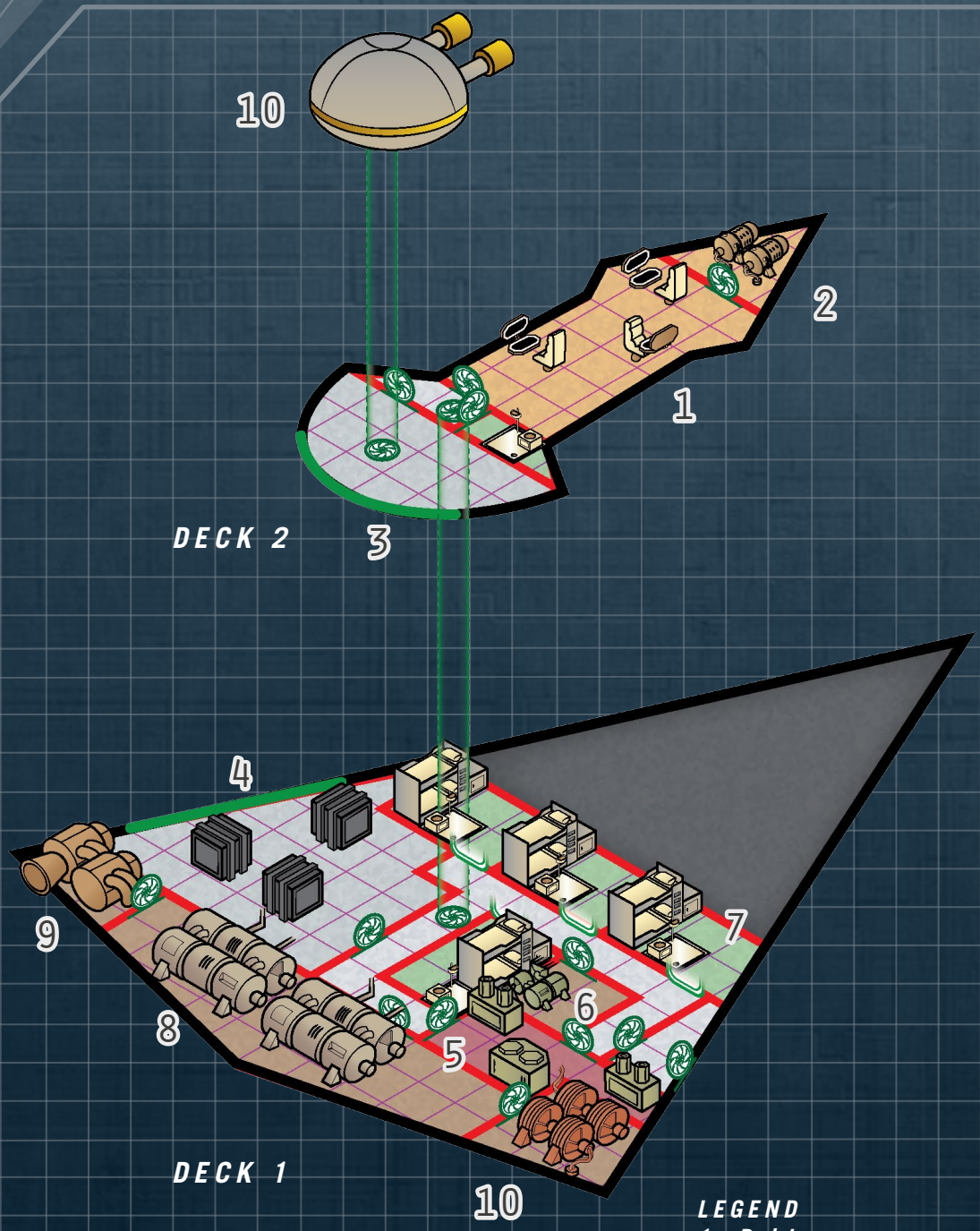
PURCHASE COST
MCr146.92

POWER REQUIREMENTS

15	20	2
MANOEUVRE DRIVE	BASIC SHIP SYSTEMS	FUEL PROCESSOR
15	**2**	**3**
JUMP DRIVE	SENSORS	WEAPONS

40
HULL POINTS

The megacorporation SuSAG maintains a number of black sites outside Imperial borders. When travelling to them, their scientists and corporate officers like to maintain complete confidentiality. To that end, the company maintains a small fleet of stealth couriers built on the standard scout/courier hull. In addition to superior stealth and an emissions absorption grid, this variant of the class contains no probe drones, substitutes a laboratory in place of the standard workshop and has a collapsible fuel tank that can extend its range by one parsec if desired.



LEGEND

1. Bridge
2. Sensors
3. Docking space
4. Cargo hold
5. Laboratory
6. Fuel processor
7. Staterooms
8. J-drive
9. M-drive
10. Power plant
11. Double turret

SUSAG 9, DEEP-SPACE RESEARCH STATION

TL12		TONS
Hull	12,000 tons, Buffered Planetoid	–
Armour	4	–
M-Drive	Thrust 0	60
Power Plant	Fusion (TL8), Power 3,000 (increased size)	375
Backup Power Plant	Stellar Energy Array and Capacitors	530
Fuel Tanks	52 weeks of operation	390
Bridge		60
Computer	Core/50	–
Sensors	Improved	3
	Extended Array	6
	Improved Signal Processing	1
Weapons	Triple Turret (pulse lasers) x10	10
	Triple Turret (missile racks) x6	6
	Triple Turret (sandcasters) x4	4
Ammunition	Missiles x360	30
	Sandcaster Barrels x240	12
Systems	Multi-Environment Space (60 tons)	63
	Biosphere	100
	Advanced Probe Drones x12	2.4
	Repair Drones	120
	Briefing Rooms x2	8
	Docking Space x2 (200 tons)	440
	Full Hangar (400 tons)	800
	Internal Docking (400 tons)	1,200
	Laboratories	480
	Medical Bay	16
	Training Facilities	20
	Workshop	12
	Pharmaceutical and Biochemical Manufacturing Plant (output: 4 tons/day)	100
Accommodations	Staterooms x120	480
	High Staterooms x4	24
	Residential Zone x75	300
	Emergency Low Berths x4	4
	Brig	4
Software	Manoeuvre/0	–
	Library	–
	Anti-Hijack/2	–
	Auto-Repair/1	–
	Intellect	––
	Science (General)	–
	Mentor/2*	–
	Research Assist/2*	–
Common Areas		200
Cargo		576

*The Mentor and Research Assist software suites are described in the *Deep Space Exploration Handbook* from the Great Rift boxed set.

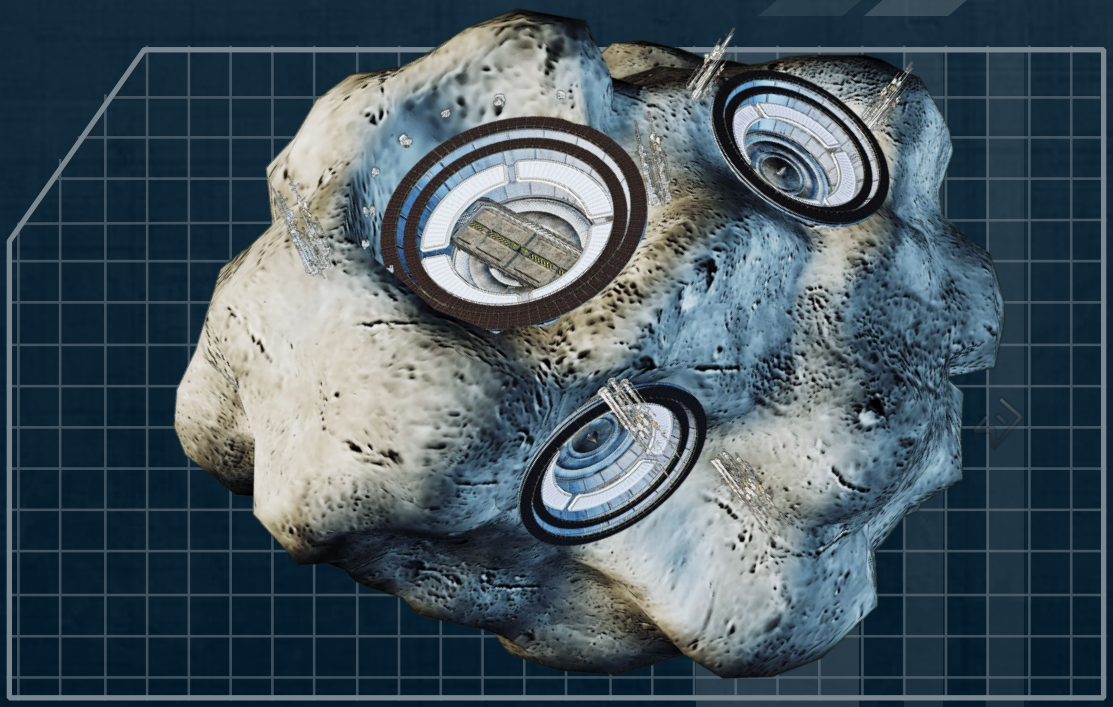
When SuSAG wants to make products that are illegal or controversial, they most often do it in extra-Imperial facilities like SuSAG 9. Whilst the facility was disavowed by SuSAG years ago, it remains functional under the auspices of its original research director, Dr. Uani Dolchiss. As an independent site, SuSAG 9 is largely responsible for its own maintenance and security, which has left it in a rather shabby state. Many of its original wings are all but abandoned but Dr. Dolchiss does what she can to ensure the site's security so that her work can go on unhindered.

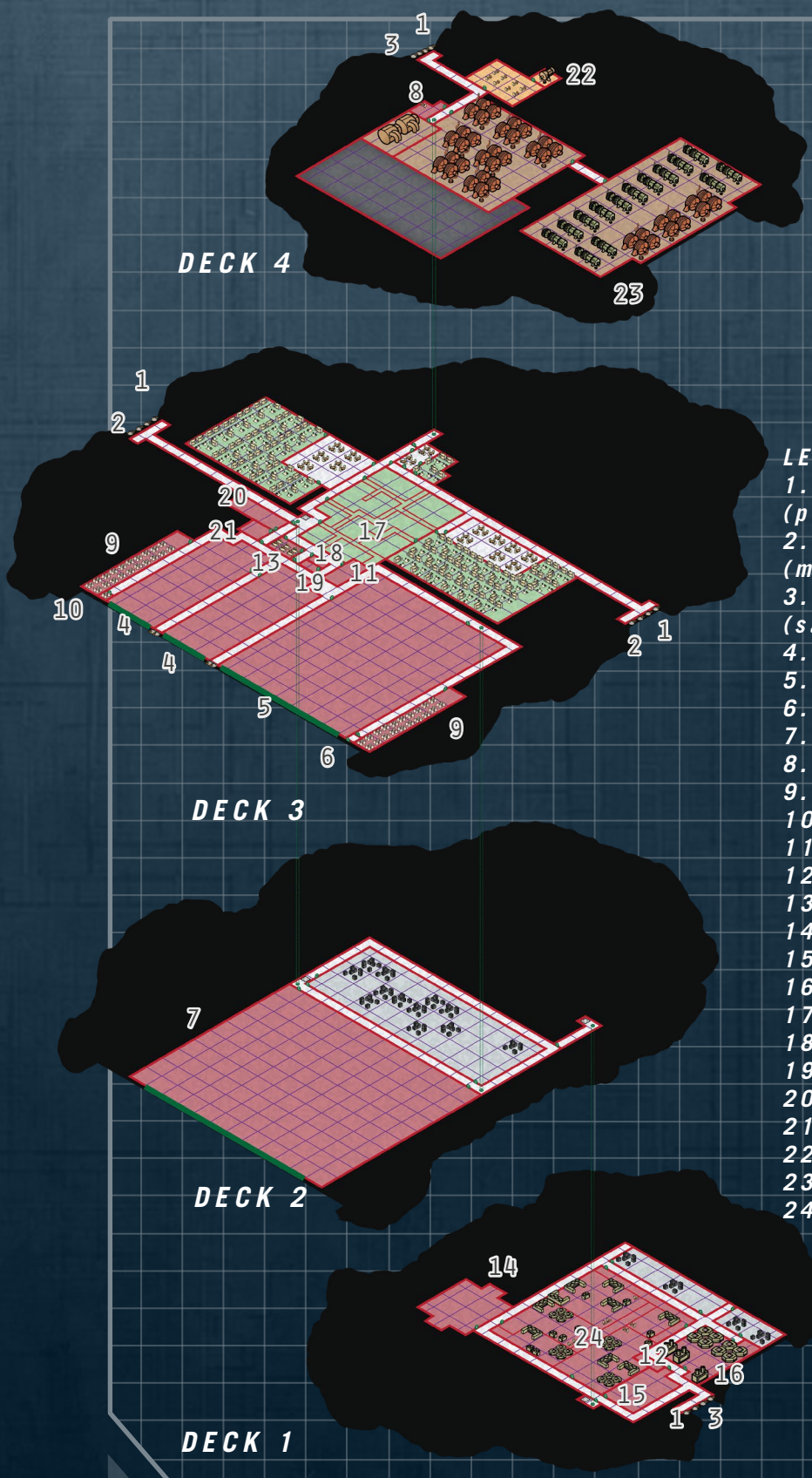
The main fusion power plant is operational but its increased size is a reflection of somewhat shoddy maintenance over the years. After the station went independent, it could no longer rely on the supply lines of its former parent company and Dr. Dolchiss has had to make do with parts from a number of sources, including Trexalon. The backup power plant is essentially a 30-ton solar array that distributes energy to 500 tons of TL12 high-efficiency batteries.

POWER REQUIREMENTS

2,400	13	100
BASIC STATION SYSTEMS	SENSORS	BIOSPHERE
4	140	4
MEDICAL BAY	WEAPONS	LOW BERTHS
20	200	6
TRAINING FACILITIES	MANUFACTURING PLANT	RESIDENTIAL ZONE

7,200
HULL POINTS





LEGEND

1. Triple turrets (pulse lasers)
2. Triple turrets (missile racks)
3. Triple turrets (sandcasters)
4. Docking space
5. Full hanger
6. Airlock
7. Internal docking space
8. Workshop
9. Repair drones
10. Probe drones
11. Training facilities
12. Breifing rooms
13. Medical bay
14. Biosphere
15. Multi-environment space
16. Manufacturing plant
17. Residential zone
18. Low berths
19. Brig
20. Missile Stow
21. Sandcaster barrels
22. Sensors
23. Stellar energy array
24. Labs

TRAVELLER

NAVAL ADVENTURE 4: ENEMY OF MY ENEMY

Piracy has become a problem in District 268. The Travellers are sent on a mission to Collace, an Imperial client state and important ally. With the imminent annexation of the subsector, the Imperium does not want to inherit a troubled region so they are sending the Travellers' ship to troubleshoot the situation. Aided by the Collacian Planetary Navy, the Travellers go on a pirate hunt; rumours abound that pirates have a secret base somewhere in the subsector. Finding it will be difficult but when found, it is not at all what the Travellers expected and they will have difficult choices to make that could affect the future of District 268.

Enemy of My Enemy includes the following:

- A complete naval mission using the *Naval Campaign Sourcebook*.
- A stealth variant of the Type-S Scout/Courier.
- Deck plans and data for a deep-space pirate base.

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